

SCANDINAVIAN
CONTACT

Newsletter of the American Scandinavian Society of New York, Inc.

CULTURAL AWARDS

It was May 20, 1997 and A.S.S. members milled about the room at The English Speaking Union. The Annual Meeting had been held. All was found to be in order. The Society is thriving. Now it was time to enjoy the wine and cheese and to gather round to. Some found seats on scattered chairs and sofas. Others stood and craned their necks to get a glimpse of the winners of the coveted A.S.S. Cultural Grants Awards, as VP's from each nation introduced the winners selected by the Committee.



MEMBERS HAVING FUN AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

The **U.S. Representative** presented the cultural award to Erin Cressida Wilson and Sten Orting for their operatic adaptation of *The Snow Queen*.

Bo Corre and Martin Fried stepped up to receive the award for their ongoing work on the play, *The Intimate Theater*, from the VP from **Sweden**. Swedish born artist Sigrid Sandström was also a winner.

Abstract artist, Marjukka Kaminen, was the **Finnish** choice as recipient.

Iceland's choice was Anna Palmadottir, a freelance photographer.

Andre von Morisse, Norwegian painter, living in the US, and The Norwegian Immigration Association, an exhibit in progress, garnered the award from the VP representing **Norway**.

Denmark's decision was to honor Sonia Jacobsen, jazz musician and Poetry/In Transit, a project for the presentation of Danish poetry, with English translation.

The evening ended on a high note, as members headed out for various vacation destinations. The awards are funded by profits from the Christmas Journal. Please check the boxed reminder which explains how to place an ad in the Journal.

DANISH ARTISTS DECK THE WALLS AT UNIBANK

The elegant beige colored walls of Unibank Gallery formed the distinguished backdrop for the works of two Danish painters, Anne Vilsbøll and Steen Lundstrøm at an exhibition, selected by Elfi von Kantzow Alvin, chairman of the Arts Committee, under the auspices of the American Scandinavian Society.

The festive and well attended opening reception was held on September 9, 1997. Among those present were: Peter Caroe, General Manager of Unibank; Hans Hvitved, Danish Deputy Consul General; Anita Rasmussen, Cultural Attache and many A.S.S. members



L. to R. Elfi von Kantzow Alvin, Danish Deputy Consul General Hvitved, Artist Anne Vilsbøll, Steen Lundstrøm and daughter.

and friends curious to see the avant-garde collection.

Anne Vilsbøll reflects uniqueness in the use of paper as an expressive medium. Her works have created a new yardstick for the possibilities of paper in art. Her luminous colors result from the application of different layers and types of paper which ultimately are vacuum-pressed on canvas--creating a stunning effect.

Steen Lundstrøm has chosen the non-figurative as his artistic measure. He works with collages, paintings and graphics. Black is dominant and is used to put the light--and more pure colors--in perspective.

The exhibit was exciting as was evidenced by the conversations overheard as viewers enjoyed refreshments provided by Carlsberg Breweries and Tholstrup Cheese, USA, Inc.

Ib Alvin



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Thank you. It's a great privilege to be president of the society. Peter Hesselund-Jensen has left me a healthy organization, with a steadily growing membership and a brand new computer in our office at the Norwegian Church.



After six years as chairperson for the Program Committee, I must thank this dedicated group for their endless hours of volunteer work, and for all the fun and support. Long time member, Leena Scutt, is their new leader and the fall programs took off on a picture-perfect day to explore Kykuit on the

Hudson. Then, at Steinway Hall, we were enchanted by performances by three remarkable musicians... all of whom have received grants from the Society.

Charles Jones and the Cultural Grants Committee is again seeking candidates for next year's awards, and look forward to hearing your recommendations.

The Christmas Ball is planned for December 5th at the Metropolitan Club and Ritva Metso and Edith Warner are heading our fund raising efforts. Anybody can put an ad or a Christmas greeting in our Christmas Journal for a fee and funds support our Cultural Grants.

At the Unibank Gallery, the interesting exhibit of Anne Vilsbøll and Steen Lundstrøm, curated by the tireless Elfi von Kantzow Alvin, is hanging until the end of October.

My hope is that more members will bring their talents to our committees. Do not hesitate to ask anybody on the board or in committees how you may get involved.

All good wishes,
Vibeke Steineger, *President*

REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE

Ritva Metso and Edith Warner are working together again this year to produce the Christmas Journal. Last year's edition was lovely and highly successful. Funds raised through advertisements and Christmas greetings in the Journal raise the funds that make the A.S.S. cultural grant awards possible.

Corporations have been generous in their support. However, it is often overlooked that individuals are welcome to join in the holiday spirit by taking 1/4 or 1/2 page ads, wishing all Society members a Merry Christmas and good fortune in the New Year.

If you wish to make such a gesture of good will, please call Ms. Ritva Metso, Fund Raising Committee Chair at 212/821-0201. The deadline is quickly approaching. Let us hear from you today!!

Ritva Metso

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

A hearty welcome is extended to our newest members. We look forward to seeing you at any or all of the varied events planned for the coming year.

Alfred E. Andersen	William S. McKeever
Maureen F. Hakala	Kirsten L. Ott
Margaret E. Johansson	Klara K. Petersen
Monica V. Langfeldt	Diana Rayner
Christina R. March	Torhild Rom
Oddrun J. Marrone	Margery Wheat

RENDEZVOUS AT THE ROCKEFELLERS

The sunny Sunday morning in September was perfect for the fully booked tour of A.S.S. members who toured Kykuit, the former home of Nelson and Happy Rockefeller. Thirty-three sightseers viewed the beautiful Hudson River from the terrace of the estate, located near Sleepy Hollow.



Kykuit guide takes A.S.S. members on a tour of the Rockefeller Estate

They divided into two groups and a guide led them through the mansion and the gallery. The Rockefellers' art treasures include paintings, sculpture, and an exceptional array of tapestries. It was fun to see a portrait by Swedish artist, Anders Zorn, which hangs in the Grand Hall, making the Scandinavian connection.

Some of the group lunched at Phillips Manor. The general consensus was that there was more to be seen and enjoyed. Therefore, a garden tour of Kykuit is being considered as a spring outing.

A DAY IN HARLEM

Hanne Heltai will be leading a professionally guided tour of Harlem on Sunday, November 16. Usually the CONTACT prefers to report after the fact. Then events can be described just as they happened. This time, though, it might be nice to print a preview, just to whet the appetite for what will surely be a memorable day.

The Harlem bound motor coach will depart from the front of the Plaza Hotel, located between 58th and 59th Streets at 9:00 a.m. sharp. Then it's off for sightseeing of this famous area of New York. There will be a stop at the First Memorial Baptist Church to hear gospel music. The tourists will stop at the famous Harlem eatery, *Sylvia*, for soul food. The bus will return to the Plaza at 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$60.

Please call Hanne at 914-779-7925 for further information or reservations.

JUST THINKING...

A Norse All hallows Eve

The Sagas told tales that take their rightful place at the forefront of the world's literature. Lest we forget what stuff our forebears were made of, let's lend an ear to Peter's rendition. It is rare to find someone with such a comprehensive knowledge of Norse Literature (not to mention a snippet or two of Old English.) But his inimitable style smacks of Andy Rooney, E.B. White, Russell Baker or maybe it's uniquely Hesselund-Jensen. *And then he wrote...*

Soon we will be celebrating All Hallow's E'en again, when all of the little beasties and ghoulies are about. Although the old Norse would probably not be seen walking around with their progeny dressed as Batman or Goofy, they certainly did have their share of visitors from beyond, some of whom could be quite murderous. Casper the Friendly Ghost would have received very short shrift from his colleagues had he been alive... I mean dead then.

Not only the ocean, but every bog, every creek, every bridge had its demonic inhabitants eager to convert a careless passerby into eel food. The deep dark woods which covered most of the land in those days, had the usual ravenous trolls and giants able to swallow whole droves of wayfarers with nary a burp. Compared to some of those monsters, the evil *Grendel*, well known from the tale of *Beowulf*, was a mere pup, or cub or whatever appellation you would give the young of *Grendel's* species.

They had their werewolves then, as well as werebears, wereseals and wereotters, witches and *fylgjur*, the Nordic equivalent of banshees, were a big problem and the undead could appear from out of nowhere.

It was always in one's interest to stay away from haunted barrows. One fellow, *Asmund*, found himself inside the burial mound of his dead foster brother *Asvid* and the horse and hound that had been buried with *Asvid*. During the night, the body of *Asvid* jumped up and ate the horse and dog, then turned on

Asmund, who escaped with the loss of an ear, but only after chopping off *Asvid's* head and impaling him with a stake.

The *Laxdaela Saga* tells of an unpleasant fellow named *Killer-Hrapp*, who was a pain to those around him when alive, but a true horror after he was dead. When he realized that he was dying, he gave orders to his household that he be buried standing up underneath his living room. That would have been a tip-off to most but apparently not to this bunch.

Old *Killer* came back and polished off most of his servants and some of his neighbors. His was not some ectoplasmic ethereal form, but *Killer-Hrapp* in the flesh, deteriorated though it may have been. Whenever he finished a piece of mayhem, he would sink back into the ground and return to his grave beneath the floorboards. They tried moving the body to an outlying field, but he came back and drove his son and heir into madness and death, then wiped out neighbor *Thorstein the Black* and his entire family. Finally, after he had tried to grab one of *Olaf the Peacock's* farmhands, and engaged *Olaf* in an inconclusive wrestling match, *Olaf* had him disinterred, and, not wasting time with a wooden stake or similar half-measure, had him cremated and scattered out to sea. Enough was enough.

For the old ones it was Halloween all year round.

Peter L. Hesselund-Jensen

Axe
Reserved



for
Asvid's
head.

UGLY DUCKLING'S BIRTHDAY PARTY



Hans Christian Andersen pokes his nose over the shoulders of Leena Scutt, Harriet Nilsen and Vibeke Steineger

The Hans Christian Andersen statue which presides over the lake in Central Park (near the 72nd Street entrance) was once again, the site of the annual "Ugly Duckling's Birthday Party." On Saturday, September 20th, at 11 a.m., story teller Diane Wolkstein, drew a crowd of children, parents and grandparents to the annual rendition of fairy tales, stories that live in our collective memories.

The challenging jump rope contest followed (definitely NOT for children of all ages.) Then contestants and cheerleaders refreshed with juices and cookies provided by the Society.

SMOOTH SAILING WITH NEW OFFICERS

Things went so smoothly that the transition to the new leadership on the Board of Directors went almost unremarked. Former President Peter Hessellund-Jensen passed the gavel to *Vibeke Steineger*.


Leena Scutt replaces Vibeke Steineger as Chairperson of the Program Committee.


Harriet Nilsen is the new Corresponding Secretary and *Pauline Tonnesen* fills the post of Recording Secretary. *Susan Ullman* will be in the newly created Public Relations position and the incoming V. P. for Norway is *Rolf Kogstad*.


The Board is rounded out by members continuing their terms. *Jan Nytzen* is Executive V.P. *Gudmunder Kjaernsted* continues as V.P. for Iceland; *Torben Poulsen*, V.P. for Denmark; *Sole Ohberg*, V.P. for Finland and *Jolyon Stern*, V.P. for the U.S.A. *Ritva Metso* serves as Fund Raising Chairperson and *Edith Warner* as Journal Chairperson. *Edda Magnusson* covers Membership; *Charles Jones*, Cultural Grants; *Elfi von Kantzow Alvin*, Arts Committee; *Rolf Stang*, Publicity Consultant and *Rigmor Swensen*, Editor.


The entire Board welcomes you all back to what promises to be another exciting and innovative year.


HERE AND THERE, THIS AND THAT...


 The Christmas Bazaar at the Danish Seamen's Church, 102 Willow Street, Brooklyn, will take place on Saturday, November 22, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.


 The Swedish Seamen's Church hosts its Christmas Bazaar at 5 E. 48th St., Nov. 21 & 22.


 The Norwegian Seamen's Church, 317 E. 52nd St., holds its Christmas Bazaar Nov. 20 - 22 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m with a cultural program at 7 p.m.

 Miles Manning informs us that The Danish Contemporary Art Gallery (DAC) has relocated to 525 West 22nd Street, in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. It is scheduled to open Nov. 15, featuring new paintings by Kehnet Nielsen, a series called, *Surfaces*.

 *The Mika Pohjola Quartet* is playing at the Cornelia Street Cafe, Saturday, October 25.

 Anniken Thue, Director, The Oslo Museum of Applied Art, will discuss the role of museums in a changing world at the National Design Museum, 2 East 91st Street on Monday, October 27 at 6:30 p.m. A.S.S. members, \$10.

 Vala Hafstad, Icelandic painter, will open her art exhibit, *North*, Saturday, November 15 at 2:00 p.m. at the Cornelia Cotton Gallery, in Croton-on-Hudson.

 Do not miss *Jerusalem*, Bille August's new film in Swedish with English subtitles. (Ed. Note: I hope you can find a showing. There should be one in Huntington in November.)

NINA-MARGRET GRIMSDOTTIR • NINA CROTHERS • RAGIN WENK-WOLFF

HIGHLIGHT AN EVENING AT STEINWAY HALL

The grand pianos of Steinway Hall, the majestic crystal chandelier hanging from the hand-painted dome and the wonderful paintings of the world's greatest composers set the stage for three of our outstanding Scandinavian performers, on October 7th. All three are former recipients of The American Scandinavian Society Cultural Awards. We have our new Program Committee Chairperson, Leena Scutt to thank for arranging the lovely evening.

Icelandic pianist, *Nina-Margret Grimsdottir*, presented a passionately and brilliantly executed Mendelssohn, an Icelandic dance by Sveinbjornsson, and selections from George Gershwin. The highlight of the debut and world premiere of a new piece by composer John A. Speight, *For Nina-Margret*, an evocative composition depicting the sounds and feelings of New York. Many of us met Mr. Speight and his wife earlier this year when they appeared at the King Olav V's Church. We were thrilled to be the first to hear this exceptionally fine composition.

Finnish-American violinist, *Nina Crothers*, was a most special delight, endearing us with the great depth of her mellow, deep and soulful sounds. She performed Tulindberg, the first known Finnish composer, and then six bagatelles for solo violin by Finnish composer, Mustonen. A light Finnish folk song balanced her program.

Greatly acclaimed Norwegian violinist, *Ragin Wenk-Wolff*, treated us with her virtuosity, dexterity and demonstrated her mastery of various techniques on the violin. She played Pugnani-Kreisler, *For Ragin*, by the contemporary Norwegian composer, Johan Kvandal, who is one of the most performed Scandinavian composers living today. Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane*, for violin and Luthreal, was featured with its gypsy flair. Steinway Hall was perfect for this rendition because it provided a rare Luthreal, an upright piano, played by Ragin's accompanist, *Evan Solomon*.

Susan Ullmann

A.S.S. ALMANAC

1997

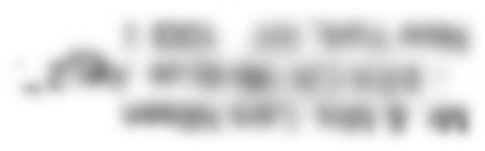
- Sept. 9 - Oct. 31** **DANISH ARTISTS** –Anne Vilsbøll and Steen Lundstrøm, Unibank Gallery, 20 West 55th, N.Y.C. (See article, Danish Artists Deck the Walls at Unibank, this issue.)
- Sept. 20** **"UGLY DUCKLING'S BIRTHDAY PARTY,"** "at the Hans Christian Andersen Statue, Central Park, 72nd St. entrance, N.Y.C (See photo, this issue.)
- Sept. 21** **KYKUIT (THE ROCKEFELLER ESTATE) TOUR.** (See article, this issue, "Rendezvous at the Rockefeller.")
- Oct. 7** **THE STEINWAY HALL RECITAL WITH NINA-MARGRET GRIMSDOTTIR, NINA CROTHERS AND RAGIN WENK-WOLF.** (See article, this issue.) Steinway Hall, 109 West 57th Street, N.Y.C.
- Oct. 12** **THE NORWAY RUN, GRETE'S GREAT GALLOP AND THE TROLL STROLL.** Central Park Mall.
- Nov. 16** **A DAY IN HARLEM.** Meet Hanne Heltai at the Plaza Hotel, between 58th and 59th Sts. 9:00 A.M. Call 914-779-7925 for reservations. Cost \$60.



DEC. 5 – THE 1997 CHRISTMAS BALL.
The Metropolitan Club.
Cocktails at 7:00 p.m. Dinner at 8 p.m.

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