

SCANDINAVIAN
CONTACT

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

"KRISTINA"

The Swedish Consul General, Dag Sebastian Ahlander and his wife, Gunilla von Arbin, have become a major part of the Scandinavian scene in New York. We've met them skating through the rain under umbrellas at the annual skating party in Central Park. They've graciously hosted several A.S.S. functions at their residence.

Last April 22, was a most charming evening. The Honorable Dag Sebastian Ahlander invited A.S.S. members to a discussion and signing of his book, *Kristina, Drottningen Som Gjorde Som Hon Ville*. Kristina was born in 1626 and became Queen of Sweden when she was six years old, upon the death of her father Gustav II Adolf. It tells the tale of woman monarch in a world of men, and a woman who chose to do as she saw fit. Historians looked askance at this and she is much maligned in the chronicles. However, Ahlander will give you a distinctly different view of the queen who wouldn't marry, learned Latin, Greek, German, French and Italian, secured peace with Germany. She then became a Catholic and had to abdicate the throne.



Program Committee Chair, Leena Scutt, presents flowers to the Hon. Dag Sebastian Ahlander.

Just as interesting is Ahlander's story of how he came to write the book, designed for 8 to 18 year olds. The Ahlanders attended a performance at their daughters' school. The girls portrayed historical women. "But," said Ahlander to the head mistress, "the European women you portray are not admirable. We have only seen the likes of Marie Antoinette." The head mistress replied that if there were any famous European women, Ahlander had best write a book about one of them. Some people just can't resist a dare. That was the birth of *Kristina*. It has been so successful in Sweden, that he has been requested to write other historical works for this age group. It was an evening full of levity and fun—and we learned something, too.

FINNS AND FRIENDS FROLIC AT THE EMBASSY



Daniele Flack, Ronald Flack, Edda Magnusson, Harriet Nilsen, Ian Nilsen, John Magnusson
Photo by R. Metso

Twenty-five adventurers traveled by Metroliner, AMTRAK, Greyhound Bus and automobile to tour the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C. on May 16, 1998. It was an opportunity for old and new friends to get together as they came from all parts of the tri-state area. Even D.C. natives (and former New Yorkers), Ronald Flack, the former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark and his wife, Daniele, joined the group.

"From the glass and steel entrance, one could see straight through the building, surrounded on three sides by tall, impressive trees. The feeling conveyed was that of entering a forest," comments Edda Magnusson. Many of the offices, constructed of wood and copper led onto balconies, completing the sense of oneness with nature.

Leila Takala was the guide for the day, leading her group through an exhibit displaying a century of innovation by the Finnish transnational industrial giant, Bonk Business, Inc. An absorbing collection of photos from the Bonk family archives were supported by brightly restored machines, for example the Garum Mechanical Waiter (1911) and the Freakwave Transmuter (1968). (It's a good thing we know and love these Finns.)

One of the highlights of the tour was the visit to the Sauna, on the lower level. Unfortunately time and opportunity did not permit a trial sweat. Here executives conduct their business and repair to the adjoining bar for refreshments. The increasing percentage of female executives calls for some readjustment of protocol.

Some members chose to return home. Others overnighted in Washington and took in some of the other sights on their own.



SUMMER 1998

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Here it is June and it is hard to believe that my first year as president of the American Scandinavian Society has gone by so quickly. All of our events have been so special and successful because of the united efforts of so many people that space does not permit naming them all.



Thank you all for a wonderful year! Enjoy every minute of the summer. The A.S.S. Almanac gives just a taste of the varied programs coming next season. I look forward to seeing you all again in September, refreshed and ready to celebrate our 90th Anniversary!

Vibeke Steineger, *President*



ORREFORS CELEBRATES AN ANNIVERSARY

What are those A.S.S. members and friends up to now? One catches a glimpse as they pass through the doors of the Galleri Orrefors Kosta Boda on East 57th Street and Park Avenue. Irene Schyberger, VP of retail sales and gallery manager emerges as hostess and introduces the group to the magic world of crystal and glass, a special exhibit to celebrate the Orrefors' Centenary, 1898 to 1998.

The visitors learn that many companies have merged. Orrefors and Kosta Boda did so some time ago. Royal Copenhagen has become part of the company and is now known as Royal Scandinavia.

The first floor encompasses the Gallery; downstairs there is a newly created display area featuring more striking contemporary as well as classic art pieces.

A delightful reception follows the tour. There is an aura hinting that the exhibition evidences that Orrefors' has simply become more accessible. The American public is now increasingly attracted to Orrefors, and Kosta Boda has brought with it a new less expensive line of glassware. As an added attraction, guests on the tour were invited to shop at discount prices.

THE ANNUAL ME

This year's Annual Party for the Cultural Grants Award proved to be one of the most exciting in memory. The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society was the venue for the event. Members met at 6:00 p.m. and promptly processed the business at hand. Chairpersons of the Program Committee, Arts Committee and Membership Committee reported on the events of the season. The financial report indicated that the club is operating in the black. Candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee were duly elected. The business part of the evening was dispatched with and the atmosphere adopted an aura of celebration.

THE SIXTEN EHRLING AWARD PRESENTATION...

The evening was dedicated to the venerable Swedish conductor, Sixten Ehrling, in honor of his 80th birthday. His comment, "Everything I've done, is many years ago," bears closer scrutiny. Ehrling conducted the Detroit Orchestra for ten years. He moved on to become head of the Orchestra Department at the Juilliard School, conducting several times at the Metropolitan Opera. One of the outstanding conductors of our time, Ehrling continues to enthusiastically promote contemporary Swedish music.



L-R: Sixten Ehrling presenting to Johan Molander.

There was a spring in his step as Ehrling moved to the podium and conferred the "Sixten Ehrling Award" to Swedish director, Johan Molander. Molander has close ties to the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and is currently Resident Stage Director at the Royal Opera in Stockholm. Molander returns to lecture at the A.S.S. on October 7, 1998.

AWARDING THE CULTURAL GRANTS...

See Photo's of the Grant Presentations on page 3.

Excitement mounted as time came for the final portion of the program. Charlie Jones and his committee of VPs from each of the member countries have a difficult job each year as they choose from among many worthy applicants, those that will receive the letter which begins, "It is with great pleasure that I inform you the American Scandinavian Society of New York has selected you as this year's recipient of their Cultural Grant."

Gunhild Ljung presented Eva Engman, a ballerina and singer, with the award from Sweden. Eva wants to "share and spread the knowledge of the deep well of exciting Swedish folk music and especially the 'locklata' from the province of Dalarna," she explained. This award

A.S.S. ALMANAC

Our Program Committee presents the following to celebrate our
1998 90th ANNIVERSARY !!

SEPTEMBER 20 AT 4:00 P.M.

VISIT TO MEET THE SWEDISH ARTIST LARS WESTWIND, BUILDER, CRAFTSMAN, PIONEER in his Harlem townhouse. Attendance limited.

OCTOBER 7

LECTURE BY JOHAN MOLANDER, STAGE DIRECTOR, ROYAL OPERA, STOCKHOLM.

OCTOBER 10

A TOUR AND LUNCH AT THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, Hyde Park, New York.

NOVEMBER 10

CONCERT at Steinway Hall.

DECEMBER 4

CHRISTMAS BALL at the Metropolitan Club.

Future Events... Dates to be announced:

PRE-OWNED CLOTHING SALE AND FASHION SHOW.

A MUSICAL HAPPENING WITH MUSICOLOGIST KARL HAAS AND FRIENDS.

ART EXHIBIT at Unibank Gallery .



PARICIPATE IN A HISTORY SEARCH!

To find the history of
The American
Scandinavian
Society

Please see the details
of how you can help
Mr. Robert Warner
in

*"A Call for
Memorabilia"*

in the article
on the reverse
side of this page.

Here There, This and That...

Well, the rains came down and the floods came up, but Rolf Stang shook off the drops just like the Ugly Duckling. On June 13, a special Hans Christian Andersen story-telling event was scheduled to take place at the great story teller's statue in Central Park. This special day was designated to celebrate the "HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARD OF HONOUR, FOR 1998," which had been conferred to the president of our Center, Lennard K. Rambusch at Nyborg Castle, Denmark.

Spirits were high, and Stang, in an 1870's costume, told the story of the Ugly Duckling with gusto. But Mother Nature (or perhaps El Nino) did not cooperate. Several hardy souls withstood the weather, but let's hope for a rain check of some kind!

The A.S.S. joined the American Scandinavian Foundation by hosting a Scandinavian Cafe at **A Swedish Midsummer Festival** in Battery Park on June 19. Proceeds went to support the restoration of the Swedish Cottage in Central Park.

Garrison Keillor has written a super article about Denmark which appears in this month's *National Geographic*. His text reveals his special affection for Denmark. The *National Geographic's* photographers made the article unforgettable.

- A TALE OF TAXES-

Rows of wooden chairs separated by a middle aisle, natural brick walls graced with black and white illustrations of some of the most famous people of our times, a romantic rooftop garden with umbrella tables and a rustic fence—a setting to savor!

However, people streamed in, helped themselves to hors d'oeuvres and filled all the chairs available. They were here, at the Illustrator's Club, to hear Peter Hesselund Jensen explain tax laws.

Peter had a great deal to say. People sat in rapt attention and had many questions during the Q & A period. Of course, space will not permit noting even the most important questions concerning tax ramifications for citizens, aliens and non-citizen spouses of citizens.

These informative presentations are an integral part of involvement in the A.S.S. Watch for upcoming programs of this nature.



A.S.S. President Vibeke Steineger and immediate past president Peter Hesselund Jensen talking taxes.

ETING BECOMES A HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR!

will enable her to continue voice training.

Sculptor and photographer, Magnus Sigurdarson, comes from Iceland, but now shows his work in Gallery DUMBO—Down Under the Manhattan Bridge. Sigurdarson was in Iceland, and unable to accept his award personally. However, his representative, who claimed to be wearing Sigurdarson's jacket, accepted with aplomb, quoting the artist as saying the award made him feel like, "I am king of the world."

Christina Pletten received the award from Norway's VP, Rolf Kogstad. She is the editor-in-chief of the Norway Times, and has done an admirable job in revitalizing that century old newspaper.

Torben Poulsen, Danish VP stepped up to the podium to introduce Dorrit Matson, conductor of the

Scania Symphony. She is no stranger to the A.S.S. She has received two previous grants. In April, Scania Symphony played Saeverud and Grieg at a noon hour concert in Trinity Church. This outstanding group continues to need our support.

Finnish singer, Johanna Grussner received her grant from Sole Ohberg, VP from Finland. Johanna sang the Lucia role at our 1997 Christmas Ball. These funds will go toward helping her to complete her graduate degree at Manhattan School of Music.



the 'Sixten Ehrling Award'

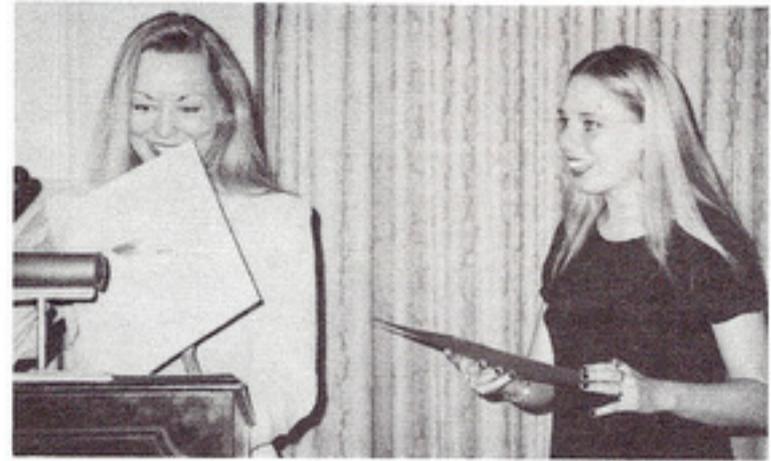
graduate degree at Manhattan School of Music.

AND TO FINISH THE EVENING...

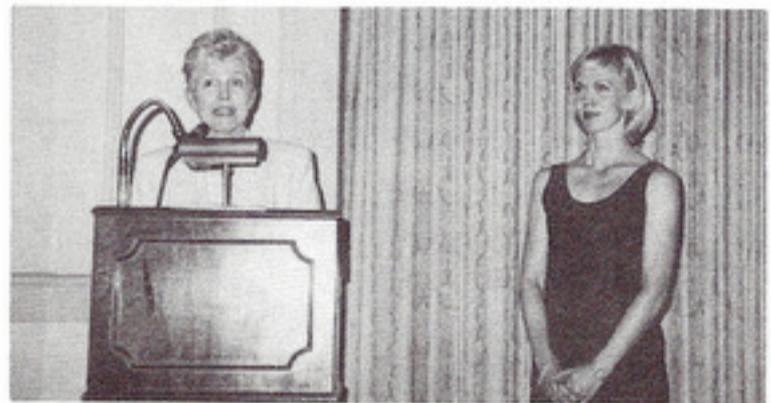
The evening came to a conclusion as guests gathered around tables of hors d'oeuvres and tasty dessert treats. *It was a worthy way to conclude the 1997-98 season.*



L-R Christina Platten accepting the grant from Rolf Kogstad, Norway V.P.



L-R Sole Ohberg, Finland V.P. presenting grant to Johanna Grussner.



L-R Gunhild Ljung presenting the award from Sweden to Eva Engman.



L-R A riend accepts grant for Magnus Sigurdarson (who was in Iceland) from Charlie Jones.



L-R Torben Poulsen, Danish V.P. awarding the grant to Dorrit Matson

Thank you, from A.S.S. to Ib Alvin for these fine photographs!

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