

INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • Galesburg, Illinois 61401 • (309) 342-2361

Fall 2004

The Officers and Directors Of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association 2004-2005

On July 13th, the annual meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association was held at the Site.

At that time, the officers and directors of the Association were elected for the following year.

President - Norm Winick
Vice President - Margaret Krueger
Secretary - Pat Reyburn
Treasurer - John Heasley

Directors

Julie Bondi
Rex Cherrington
Steve Holden
Janet Lundeen
Jane Murphy
Richard E. Pearson
Dr. Richard Sandburg
Barbara Schock
Christian Schock
Katheleen Stout
Mary E. Strawn
Dr. Tom Turlentes

Newsletter Editor
Barbara Schock

Acting Site Manager
Steve Holden

The Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Visitors' Center. All members are welcome to attend the Board meetings.

A Special Board Meeting

On September 10, 2004, the Board of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association will hold a special meeting to honor Dr. Richard Sandburg. He is a nephew of Carl Sandburg and has written a number of articles for *Inklings and Idlings* in the past.

Dr. Sandburg is almost ninety years old and looking forward to another visit to Galesburg. Tomas Junglander from Stockholm, Sweden, will be driving Dr. and Mrs. Sandburg from their home in Rockford.

A short business meeting will be conducted by President Norm Winick and refreshments and a social time will follow. Members of the Association are cordially invited to attend. The event will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

* * *

Outta Site

Even though it has been two years since her retirement and a month since her passing, there remains a void here at the Site that only Carol Nelson could fill. My heartfelt condolences go out to her family and all of those who knew and loved her.

Memorial donations are still coming to the Association, which

is considering using the funds for lighting the brick walk to the Barn. Monies received are presently in excess of \$1,000.

So--what's happening at the Site? Harry has painted the arbor on the west side. Bert has planted roses on the arbor, although since then I've located a source for "antique" climbing roses, so things might be switched around a bit.

Bert has been busy with the lawn, weed eating, edging, mowing, transplanting and pruning. He has also planted the \$200-worth of perennials which the Association allotted to the Site: shasta daisies, primrose, ajuga, lemon lilies and hostas. This is really the first year that the garden has "matured"--the plantings are coming into their own, filling in just about everywhere. Carol would be proud.

The Visitors' Center has been painted on the exterior and I'm waiting for the shutters to be reinstalled.

Within the last two or three weeks we have had five of the southside cottage windows broken. Hopefully this will be the last of such activity by the neighborhood scamps.

I have received the Site budget from Springfield. It is a few more dollars than last year, but there could still be a 3-4% cutback.

We are looking forward to the first of the fall Songbag Concert Series, due to begin on Thursday, September 16th at 7 p.m.

- Steve Holden

* * *

Carol Nelson
1933-2004

For almost a quarter of a century, Carol Nelson managed the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. She and the Site went through several title changes, but the objective was always to preserve the history of the early life of Carl Sandburg.

Carol was tenacious in her efforts to improve and expand the small cottage where Carl Sandburg was born. A Visitors' Center with museum-quality exhibits was added to the Site. The grounds were beautified with flowers, shrubs and trees. The most recent addition was the Barn in which the Songbag Concerts are now conducted.

Most residents of the Galesburg area remember visiting Sandburg's birthplace on school tours. They probably were greeted by Carol and given a lively talk about the life and poems of Carl Sandburg. She was willing to use recordings, film, video, anything, to make the poet come alive for the young people.

Carol wasn't afraid to get her hands dirty--laying a brick sidewalk, planting perennials or mowing the lawn. She was a jack-of-all-trades when it came to maintaining the Site.

She always saw opportunities to promote the Carl Sandburg heritage to tourists and visiting scholars. She couldn't understand why longtime residents of Galesburg took Carl Sandburg for granted. He was a world renowned poet, historian and writer who was born in Galesburg. He was a descendant of two of those migrant Swedes who came to America for a better life. All those things were something to be

celebrated.

A Memorial Fund has been established by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Contributions may be sent to the Association at 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois 61401. The Board of Directors will determine a permanent memorial for Carol Nelson later this year.

* * *

Another Member Lost

On June 27, 2004, Helmut Krueger passed away. He and his wife, Margaret, have been members of the Association since they moved to Galesburg in 1992.

He was born October 13, 1925, in Heeren-Wevre, Germany. He came to the United States with his parents as a boy. He grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin, and graduated from Lawrence University in that city. He served in the Navy during World War II.

His 35-year career was spent as a research physicist in electronic technologies. Helmut was a skilled woodworker and carver. In his retirement, he made many wooden toys for the Salvation Army. The toys were given to needy children at Christmas time.

Mr. and Mrs. Krueger spent many hours and contributed their talents to the restoration of the Elgin Area Historical Museum in Elgin, Illinois, during their residence there. The building was originally built in 1856 for Elgin Academy, a private school. It now houses many displays about Elgin history.

Helmut Krueger crafted the sign on the front of the Barn on the grounds of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. The next time you visit a Songbag Concert, be sure to notice it.

* * *

Carl Sandburg and the Nobel Prize

(Tomas Junglander is a Swedish businessman based in Stockholm. He grew up in Mjolby only a few miles from Apunna and Asbo, the respective birthplaces of Carl Sandburg's parents. He has written this article to explain the reason Carl Sandburg never received the Nobel Prize for Literature.)

"I imitated Sandburg as closely as I could."

Swedish writer and Nobel Prize winner, Harry Martinson, prior to perfecting his own style.

2004 marks the centenary of the birth of the Swedish writer Harry Martinson. His journey through life, from his beginnings as a foster child, through a period as a vagabond reduced to begging, followed by election to the Swedish Academy in 1949 and becoming the joint winner of the Nobel Prize in 1974 in Literature, is one of the most fascinating life stories in twentieth century Swedish literature.

Harry Martinson's first collection of poems, *Ghost Ship*, was published in 1929. It consisted of poems employing motifs that reflected the sea and the life of a seaman. In 1930, he contributed to an anthology of work by members of the writers' group known as *Fem Unga* (Five

Young Writers). This book became one of the ground-breaking works of modern Swedish literature.

MODERNISM

Modernism praised life, affirming the modern era, its machines and its pulsating power. It represented a freer view of love and sexuality and battled against clichés in all areas of life. The intention of poetry was not merely to provide enjoyment and an uncritical sense of calm, but rather to free humanity and intensify the experience of real life. The young poets abandoned traditional forms of poetry, and wrote in free verse, unfettered by conventional metric forms.

The impulses driving modernist literature in Sweden came from many sources including Russian poets, Finnish authors who wrote in Swedish and, above all, American poets in general and Carl Sandburg in particular.

SANDBURG AND MARTINSON

Martinson gained a dazzling mastery of the new poetic style, characterized by rich imagery. His poetry, like Sandburg's, often exhibited precise, concrete and detailed observation. Despite the sober tone of Martinson's poetry, his precise observations give the reader a sense of being present at the events depicted. His bold associations contributed to the capacity of his poetry to elicit powerful moods. The combination of sweeping visions and exact details characterizes both Martinson and Sandburg.

Harry Martinson was the joint winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1974, while Carl Sandburg was nominated for the Prize at least five times--in 1940, 1947, 1949, 1952 and 1953--

but never won it.

Sandburg and Martinson met once, during Sandburg's last visit to Sweden in 1959.

HOW WINNERS OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE ARE CHOSEN

The Swedish Academy founded in 1786 was assigned the task of choosing the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1902. The Academy has 18 members who are elected for life.

To be eligible for the Nobel Prize, a candidate must be nominated by a suitably qualified person. The following are entitled to nominate candidates: Members of the Swedish Academy and other national academies worldwide, professors of literary and linguistic disciplines at universities, former winners of the Prize and presidents of authors' organizations.

All nominations must be supported by a motivation and are subject to total secrecy. In the process of choosing a winner, the Swedish Academy is assisted by a Nobel Committee comprised of three to five Academy members. The Committee's task is to prepare the ground for consideration of the candidates by registering, collecting and presenting nominations and commissioning various studies of the authors in question after which the Committee members make recommendations to the Academy.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF CANDIDATES

After the Academy has approved the Committee's preliminary list, it requests the Committee to prepare a definitive list of approximately five priority candidates. During the summer, Academy members are required to

read from the production of the shortlisted candidates. Many of the more prominent literary figures recur on the definitive list year after year. By the end of the summer vacation period, the Committee members are expected to have done their homework and in the first half of October the Academy reaches a decision. For the choice of the prizewinner at least twelve of the 18 members must cast their votes and a candidate must receive more than half of the votes cast.

SANDBURG THE CANDIDATE

As the Academy's expert on American literature and a member of the Nobel Committee, Per Hallstrom had a strong influence on whether Sandburg should receive the prize or not.

In his biography, you can read: "Pessimism is the basic chord in his writing and Schopenhauer his philosopher."

It was not unnatural that Hallstrom disliked the work of Sandburg. Sandburg the optimist who described America as a strong and wonderful country, including during the 1950s when the U.S. was not exactly popular among cultural celebrities in Sweden. Nevertheless, Sandburg had many supporters in Sweden and in 1950 he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Uppsala. However, Sandburg did not come to Uppsala to receive the honor in person. This disappointed his supporters who had long backed Sandburg as a worthy candidate for the Nobel Prize. Accordingly, it is likely that his decision not to go to Sweden had a negative influence on his candidature.

PRIORITY CANDIDATE

Harry Martinson, on the other hand, after being elected to the Academy in 1949, himself nominated Sandburg for the Nobel Prize in 1953. At this time, Martinson was well aware of the procedures applied by the Academy, and as a result his nomination was well supported and Sandburg was probably one of the priority candidates that year. However, Winston Churchill was the eventual winner in 1953 followed by Ernest Hemingway in 1954.

Any list of the ten most famous writers never to have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature would be every bit as impressive as a list of the ten most famous winners of the prize. As well as Sandburg, those who did not make the grade include Leo Tolstoy, Marcel Proust, Graham Greene, Anton Chekhov, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, Franz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht, August Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen.

The Primary Source: The Swedish Academy. All information regarding the Nobel Prize is classified for fifty years.

* * *

The Carr House

As a young boy, Carl Sandburg delivered newspapers to homes of the well-to-do on North Prairie Street. One of those houses was built by Clark E. Carr.

Clark E. Carr was born May 20, 1836, in Boston Corners, New York. His family came west and settled in Galesburg in 1851. He attended Knox College and received his law degree from Albany Law School in New York. He practiced law in Galesburg and

became active in politics. In 1861, Abraham Lincoln appointed Mr. Carr postmaster of Galesburg. His tenure lasted for 24 years, until Grover Cleveland became President.

In 1872, he co-founded **The Republican** newspaper, one of the precursors of today's **Register-Mail**. He was also secretary of the Galesburg Gas & Coke Company which provided street lighting in Galesburg's early days.

Clark E. Carr was a frequent speaker at local and state events. He was often asked to be the orator at Memorial Day observances across the state. Frequently, he wrote articles for the newspaper about his travels and historical subjects. He also wrote several books, both fiction and nonfiction.

Carr didn't serve as a soldier in the Civil War. He was appointed to the staff of Governor Richard Yates and organized regiments in Springfield. He was a member of the commission which arranged the dedication of the cemetery at the Gettysburg Battlefield in Pennsylvania. He was influential in asking President Abraham Lincoln to speak at the event.

The mansion which Carr built at 560 North Prairie Street in Galesburg has been the subject of several news stories recently. The owner for the past several decades, Marilyn Fagan, passed away and the mansion with its contents was put up for sale. Her father and uncle purchased the house and its contents from the Carr estate in 1941.

Carr built his mansion in 1894. When it was finished, he and his wife entertained the men who constructed it with a fine meal and social evening. This is how

The Galesburg Daily Mail recorded the event:

"Col. Clark E. Carr and family are now nicely settled in their elegant new home on North Prairie street and are ready to receive their friends. Before these friends should come in on them too thick, Col. Carr made up his mind that the first ones who should call and view the house should be the men who either had a hand in its construction, or else furnished the material. Last evening was the time set apart for these to call, and Mr. and Mrs. Carr made every arrangement for their comfort and entertainment. The house was illuminated from top to bottom and had on its prettiest air. At 7:30 the banquet was served. At each plate was a card on which was written the name of the person to occupy the seat and the part each person took in the construction of the house. These cards read as follows:

Wm. Wolf, architect.
Peter McL. Davidson, contractor.
C.S. Telford, plumber.
Chas. Runquist, mason.
Chas. Craig, stone contractor.
H.N. and C.H. Murphy, hardware furnishings.

"Aside from these there were present Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Fahnestock and Miss Lufkin. The menu was of the most dainty nature and was talked over for some time. After the repast Havanas were passed, and the time until 11 o'clock was spent in a very pleasant way."

* * *

The Galesburg Milliners

(In the 1890s and early 1900s, it was the fashion for women to wear elaborate headgear. The Galesburg

City Directory of 1892-1893 listed six milliners and 32 dressmakers in the city. This article from *The Galesburg Daily Mail* of September 1, 1894, gives us an idea of the importance of wearing a fashionable hat. We wonder if Mrs. Clara Sandburg made-do with the hat she owned for wearing to church.)

"There will be no flowers on the hats during the coming season. The long reign of the flowers will soon be over, and they will be superceded by birds, tips, plumes and wings.

"The feathered songsters will come to us with their songs all hushed, their plumage dyed in the "newest colors," and they will be spangled and sparkling with jet. One of the newest of fashion's devices is a feathered arrow thrust in the walking hat and glittering with jet or gold dust. Green seems to be still the favorite color, and enters in all shades. Light brown, so light that it seems to be a cross between a brown and a tan, and lilac are combined in the ultra fashionable hat, which is trimmed all over and all round. The trimming stands up in little points all over the top of the hat in a way that strikes one very oddly at first.

"There are two decided styles in the size of the new hat. One is very wide and flaring, the other is a tiny little thing that just covers the top of the head. There is no medium between these two extremes.

"The hats that will probably be favored most for street wear are the sailor and the plain felt walking hat; but for winter wear Madam may allow her fancy to run riot in the way of rich adornment."

Wrinklings and Wild Things

BLUE SILVER

(Schlaffe wohl, Carol--schlaffe wohl)

Long ago when the years were dark and the black rains used to come with strong winds and blow the front porches off houses, and pick chimneys off houses, and blow them into other houses, long ago when people had understanding about rain and wind, there was a rich man with a daughter he loved better than anything else in the world.

And one night when the black rain came with a strong wind blowing off front porches and picking off chimneys, the daughter of the rich man fell asleep into a deep sleep.

In the morning they couldn't wake her. The black rain with the strong wind kept up all that day while she kept on sleeping in a deep sleep.

Men and women with music and flowers came in, boys and girls, her playmates, came in--singing songs and calling her name. And she went on sleeping.

All the time her arms were crossed on her breast, the left arm crossing the right arm like the letter X.

So they made a long silver box, just long enough to reach from her head to her feet.

And they put on her a blue silver dress and a blue silver band around her forehead and blue silver shoes on her feet.

There were soft blue silk and silver sleeves to cover her left arm and her right arm--the two arms crossed on her breast like

the letter X.

They took the silver box and carried it to a corner of the garden where she used to go to look at blue lilacs and climbing blue morning glories in patches of silver lights.

Among the old leaves of the blue lilacs and morning glories they dug a place for the silver box to be laid in.

And men and women with music and flowers stood by the silver box, and her old playmates, singing songs she used to sing--and calling her name.

When it was all over and they all went away they remembered one thing most of all.

And that was her arms in the soft silk and blue silver sleeves, the

left arm crossing over the right arm like the letter X.

Somebody went to the king of the country and told him how it all happened, how the black rains with a strong wind came, the deep sleep, the singing playmates, the silver box--and the soft silk and blue silver sleeves on the left arm crossing the right arm like the letter X.

Before that there never was a letter X in the alphabet. It was then the king said, "We shall put the crossed arms in the alphabet; we shall have a new letter called X, so everybody will understand a funeral is beautiful if there are young singing playmates."

Carl Sandburg, Rootabaga Stories
Part Two

- Steve Holden

Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, Illinois 61401

The Songbag Concert

September 16, 2004
7:00 p.m.

The Barn
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, Illinois

Refreshments