

INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • P.O. Box 585 • Galesburg, Illinois 61402 • (309) 342-2361 • www.sandburg.org

Spring, 2012

FROM SITE SUPERINTENDENT MARTHA DOWNEY

The Carl Sandburg State Historic Site will be exceptionally busy during the 2012 Sandburg Days *festival for the mind* April 18-21. The Site will be hosting a critically acclaimed Sandburg biographer, members of the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame organization, two of Illinois' best folk musicians, creator of the poetry slam, Girl Scouts, and you.

Once again the Site is proud to host the Sandburg Days Kickoff Concert, April 19. Chris Vallillo will perform a program commissioned specifically for this event. He will present a combination of Sandburg poetry, original songs, instrumentals, and songs Sandburg collected. Vallillo, like Sandburg, has collected and documented folk music. He has been described as "Illinois preeminent prairie-poet-singer-songwriter." The concert begins at 7 pm in the Site's Bar. Following the performance refreshments will be served. This concert is sponsored by the Sandburg Days Festival and the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association.

"Carl Sandburg: Poet of the People" will be performed by Barry Cloyd in the Site's Barn on Friday, April 20 at 6:30 pm. Using some of his original music with Sandburg's poetry, American folk songs and stories of Lincoln, Cloyd will entertain and educate. This special concert is sponsored by the Galesburg Public Library as part of One Read.

There will be activities all day long Saturday,

April 21 in the Site's Barn. Starting the day will be the "Stormy, Brawling, Husky Chicago: Sandburg's Literary Influences in the City of the Big Shoulders" discussion led by Chicago Literary Hall of Fame Executive Director Donald G. Evans. The profound impact Carl Sandburg made upon the Chicago literary landscape and the people that influenced him will be discussed. Included on the panel will be Paul Durica.

Most exciting will be the appearance of Penelope Niven at the Site twice on Saturday April 21. Niven, the biographer of Carl Sandburg, Edward Steichen, James Earl Jones, and Thornton Wilder, will speak at 11 am. "Sandburg's Journey to Becoming a Biographer" will examine her journey to biography and how each of her subjects discovered themselves. She will also discuss the importance Galesburg played in Sandburg's life journey. Later at 1 pm in the Barn Penelope Niven will conduct a writing workshop "Writing Memoir, Autobiography and Family History."

Marc Smith, founder and creator of the International Poetry Slam movement, will follow Niven's talk at 12 pm. We are thrilled that he will be doing a reading of Sandburg poetry, "Sandburg to Smith." Later that day he will participate in the discussion following the showing of Paul Bonesteel's film, "The Day Sandburg Died" at the Galesburg Library. At 7:30 pm Smith will lead the 6th Annual Rootabaga Poetry Slam.

The activities in the Barn conclude with a lecture by University of Illinois Professor Tim Timberman Newcomb, "Making Poetry Urban: Sandburg on the Streets of Chicago." He will speak about Harriet Monroe and *Poetry* magazine. Newcomb is an expert on Chicago's role in modern American poetry. This lecture is sponsored by the CSHSA.

Throughout the day the Site will host activities for Girl Scouts who are in Galesburg celebrating Sandburg Days and hoping to earn the brand new Carl Sandburg Council Patch. Site volunteers Patti Christianson and Stan Shover will teach the girls Swedish folk dances and give them a Sandburg lesson. In addition to the special evening concerts the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site will be open to the public Friday and Saturday, April 20 and 21 from 10 am to 5 pm.

The Sandburg Days Committee has planned other exciting and stimulating programs for the festival. Visit the Sandburg Days website for additional activities. Information and updates at www.sandburg.edu/festival. It promises to be a wonderful celebration.

FROM CSHSA PRESIDENT CHUCK BEDNAR

In the spirit of cautious optimism we approach this new year with renewed hope and vigorous support of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). Their splendid cooperation, allowing us to utilize the Birthplace facilities for our activities, has significantly strengthened our mission statement. Because of the uncertain financial condition of the State of Illinois the future of the Birthplace Site is cloudy. How can we crystal-ball the future State budget that funds the IHPA in their responsibility of managing and maintaining fifty some historic sites?

We are indeed on the horns of a dilemma. This concern led us to initiate a dialogue with Martha Downey, our Site Superintendent with the IHPA. With the encouragement of District 74 State

Representative Don Moffitt a meeting was held at the Sandburg Site in January. The IHPA was represented by Deputy Director Catherine Shannon and Karen Everingham. We discussed ways in which our Association could effectively form a partnership with them to help keep the Site open. A number of creative ideas were on the table. Judy Guenseth, director of the Galesburg Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, cited the Birthplace as one of the most popular locations sought by visitors. Mayor Salvador Garza encouraged positive ways to find suitable solutions. As a result of the conference we were invited to submit a proposal to IHPA officials suggesting ways to sustain the Site. It included a plan to initiate a cooperative venture by supplementing their docent staff with local community volunteers. A reply to our proposal has not been received to date.

We were sorry to receive the resignation of board member Laurie Muelder late last year. Her voice will be missed. New board members Pat Kane, Chris Winick, and Mike Panther will add new vitality to our Association.

Because of the continuing deteriorating condition of a leaky roof above the exhibits in the north wing of the Visitors Center, we requested repairs from the IHPA last fall. Chuck Giger, IHPA Facilities Manager who is responsible for all their historic sites, responded. In coordination with Martha Downey the IHPA furnished architectural specifications listing the repairs and materials that were needed. We, in turn, were responsible for soliciting local sources to fund and contract the work. Rep. Moffitt was instrumental in seeking contractors and fund sources that were needed to successfully complete the project.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Galesburg Community Foundation as well as a \$1,000 contribution from an anonymous donor. Generous discounts were obtained for labor and materials from Rail City Home Improvements Co. and RP Lumber. While repairing the roof Rail City provided the

masonry work to tuck point the chimney. The balance of the remaining costs for the repairs was funded by other donations and by our Association. Upon completion this was a unique cooperative effort between the IHPA and our Association as we sought local people who were dedicated to community service on behalf of the Sandburg Site.

An exciting invitation was received from the Galesburg Public Library by staff librarian Karly Steele to participate in a "Trivia Night" at the library on March 29 at 6:30 pm. It will focus on questions and answers pertaining to Sandburg's life and Galesburg history. Proceeds from the event will benefit our Association. Sandburg's autobiography *Always The Young Strangers* has been selected by the library to highlight its springtime "One Read" program to encourage community reading.

Stan Shover, CSHSA board member and chairman of the Education Committee, was honored at the March board meeting with an appropriate toast for his work educating people about Sandburg. Stan's remarkable teaching career spans over sixty-five years in Knox and Fulton Counties' public schools. As an esteemed colleague and friend he was presented with a signed copy of *Always The Young Strangers* in appreciation of his devoted advocacy of Sandburg.



Stan Shover recognized for educating people about Sandburg at March CSHSA board meeting.

Photo by Tom Foley

A new large flat screen TV will greet visitors this year when viewing the introductory Sandburg video. The purchase, expedited by Bert McElroy, was funded through generous contributions on behalf of our late CSHSA president Norm Winick who passed away in 2010.

A new pamphlet entitled "Carl Sandburg, A Driving Tour of Historic Sites in Galesburg, IL" was completed late last year. Amy Roth, staff member of the Knox-Lombard Fifty-Year Club, volunteered to edit the graphic design into a suitable composition for printing. The pamphlet has four gate-folded pages that display a city map with thirty-four designated historic sites. Several photos are featured along with highlighted quotations pertinent to each site from Sandburg's two autobiographies. Funded in part by the Galesburg Area Convention & Visitors Bureau in collaboration with our Association, the new pamphlet is dedicated to past IHPA Site Superintendents Carol Nelson and Steve Holden and to Norm Winick.

A community-wide 175th anniversary of the founding of the City of Galesburg and Knox College is being held this year. The gala celebrations include special observations by the two remaining legacies of the First Church, the First Presbyterian Church and Central Congregational Church. During the Knox College Centennial celebrating the rededication of Old Main on June 15, 1937, Sandburg returned to Galesburg to deliver a keynote address. Earlier he received honorary degrees from both Knox and Lombard Colleges at the 70th anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in 1928.

To further city and national recognition of Sandburg as Galesburg's most famous native son a unique project is underway featuring a 9' tall bronze statue of the famous author based on a maquette study by a well-known Galesburg native, Lonnie E. Stewart. Sandburg's full standing figure, depicted holding books and a guitar slung over his shoulder, will be accompanied by a Nubian Goat. The animal

will remind visitors to the memorial of Sandburg's love of rural farm life. The Galesburg City Council approved the location of the Central Park in downtown Galesburg for the site. As a young boy Sandburg no doubt often traveled through this park while going to work at the Union Hotel or the Auditorium Theater. Central Park will be landscaped with plantings native to Illinois creating an inviting atmosphere. A new pedestrian promenade together with walkways with famous Sandburg quotations will be designed around the perimeter of the monument. Accent lighting illuminating the memorial and surrounding landscape will also be installed. Memorial flags in recognition of military veterans as well as those states associated with Sandburg's life in Illinois, Michigan, and North Carolina will be included. A Swedish flag will recognize his family heritage. Conceived by the Galesburg Public Art Commission, the Sandburg project is the first among several planned to encourage public art within the community. The GPAC group is represented by CSHSA board members Bert McElroy, Stan Shover, Barry Swanson, and Chuck Bednar. A kick-off fund raiser was recently held in late February to solicit private contributions for the memorial.

While we face uncertain financial times in our state, our Association is committed to keeping the Sandburg Site's doors open. We are keenly aware of the efforts of hundreds of community activists who recognized the value of acquiring and preserving Sandburg's Birthplace. It is in this spirit that we pledge our support to the IHPA in finding solutions that solidify the well-being of this sacred historic site. Maintaining Sandburg's remarkable legacy deserves nothing less. It is our moral obligation. Thank you for your continuing loyal support of membership in the Association. We seek to promote activities that are informative and stimulating geared to broaden the public interest in Sandburg's diverse literary career. We solicit your ideas and ways to provide a more meaningful experience in the future through benefits of membership.

SUCCESSFUL PENNY PARADE

(The following is from Stan Shover, CSHSA Education Committee chairman and chairman of the 2012 Penny Parade.)

The CSHSA has just recently completed the annual Penny Parade with pennies and money contributed by eight Knox County schools, Mr. James Hardine, customers at Casey's General Store in Abingdon, Broadview Restaurant and U.S. Cellular in Galesburg, and donations of prizes and food from Dick Blick Art Materials and North Henderson St. McDonald's and Hy-Vee and Hardees in Galesburg. Donations totaled over \$2,000 which will be used in a maintenance fund for the Birthplace.

Volunteer labor, donated materials, and cash contributions kept the Birthplace solvent during the first twenty-five years until the Illinois State Historical Library took it over in the summer of 1970. The Penny Parade was a source of substantial income during the ten years ending in 1970. It was originated in 1961 by Juanita Bednar, president of the Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association. Only four Penny Parades held since 1961 have exceeded this year's total dollar amount. The CSHSA board appreciates the cooperation of the Knox County schools and the businesses so noted above.

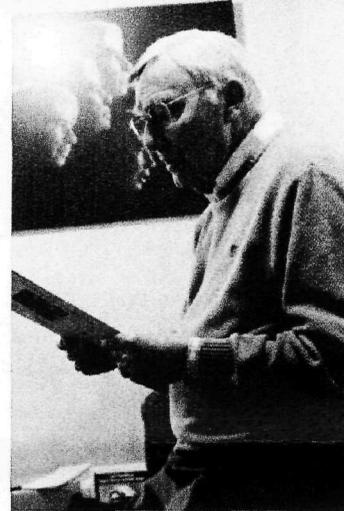
As chairman of this year's event I want recorded the exceptional response and aid from all board members and Site Superintendent Martha Downey. It was gratifying to see our board members at the party helping to greet the nearly thirty children, their teachers, and the supportive adults who dropped by to chat and/or add some change to our pennies.

Mike Hobbs, last year's Penny Parade chairman, was helpful beyond the "call of duty" in the many requirements of such a project. The Galesburg *Register-Mail* provided us community support by publishing positive material keeping the event in the minds of the public.

What did I, a very old teacher, learn from the Penny Parade?

1. Knox County students are learning more than I imagined in the hallowed halls of schools. Their questions proved emphatically that their teachers are recognizing how important Mr. Sandburg was/is to the literary world!
2. We (the CSHSA board) need to involve more adults/business enterprises in the promotion of our world famous author.
3. We need more members and more visitors to the Site if we are to preserve this jewel!
4. The CSHSA board members are exceptional individuals. They are dedicated to the preservation of the Site's historical importance.
5. The new visitors I met at the party were sincerely interested in what we are attempting to preserve.

Times are hard, but good memories were formed by the 2012 Penny Parade. Here's to \$3,000 in the 2013 Penny Parade!



Scenes from 2012 Penny Parade

Photos by Tom Foley

CARL SANDBURG WEEK PROCLAMATION

(The following proclamation was signed by Galesburg Mayor Salvador Garza on January 23, 2012.)

“Whereas, Carl August Sandburg has been internationally acclaimed as writer of poetry and children's stories, Lincoln biographer, singer and collector of American folk songs; and

Whereas, on January 6, 1878, he was born in the City of Galesburg, Illinois where he lived throughout his teen-age years; and

Whereas, Carl Sandburg's boyhood home in Galesburg, where his ashes and those of his wife Lillian are buried under Remembrance Rock, is now operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency as the Carl Sandburg

State Historic Site; and

Whereas, Carl Sandburg's first published writing about Abraham Lincoln was about his face on the penny, the coin of the common folk; and

Whereas, since 1962 schools in Galesburg have held an annual Penny Parade to collect pennies to honor Carl Sandburg and for the maintenance of his birthplace.

Now therefore, I, Salvador Garza, Mayor of the City of Galesburg, Illinois do hereby proclaim January 22-28, 2012 **CARL SANDBURG WEEK** in the City of Galesburg and encourage our citizens to read literature by Carl Sandburg and to visit his birthplace."

OGEMA, MINNESOTA THIRD GRADERS ARE CRAZY ABOUT CARL

(The following is from Erma Nodeen who delivered 500 pennies from Ogema, Minnesota students to the Birthplace during the 2012 Penny Parade Party.)

Children in the third grade at Ogema, Minnesota on the White Earth Indian Reservation have discovered Galesburg, Illinois and its famous author, Carl Sandburg, and they LOVE what they have read and heard.

The class members are penpals with the Spoon River Chapter NSDAR based in Williamsfield and Regent Erma Nodeen who send their teacher articles about Sandburg and the Penny Parade. Mrs. Nodeen also sent them a rutabaga to taste and some samples of *Rootabaga Stories*. And, as children often do at this age, the kids took off on reading Sandburg's children's stories and poems.

Mrs. Nodeen designed this unit in the 1990's when she was a teacher at Galva Unit District #224. The unit began as above with the tasting of the rutabaga and listening to those great tales of Galesburg described as the city of liver and onions. The next step was the authoring of

Turnip Tales by the students. Each student drew a name representing a letter of the alphabet and then wrote a tale by using as many words beginning with that sound as possible. Here is an example of a *Turnip Tale* written by Patrick Sloan who is now through college and a teacher himself:

RUDY RANCHER

"Rudy Rancher was really ridiculous. He raised rabid raccoons. Rudy wrestled radishes and rootabagas. Rudy wore real live rattlesnakes for boots. Rudy wrote recipes for roasting roadkill. One rainy day Rudy was racing reptiles and rocks in from Raleigh to Rio when Randy, the rebel, rearranged Rudy's wrinkled rabbit ranch. Rudy was so revolted he rigged a rocket to roast his rival. With a rattling roar it ripped into Randy's rented rickshaw. The wreckage ran down Randy's resources. Randy's reaction was rage. 'I'll return and raid that rascal's realm,' Randy said revengefully. Rudy knew Randy would return and reply with random, reckless retaliation. So Rudy readies his reserves. Rudy had a regiment of reindeer and rubber plants. When Randy tried to ransack Rudy's residence, Rudy showed no repentance. Rudy rippled the air with raw rhinoceros ribs and Randy returned them rapidly. Rudy was raged. Finally, Rudy realized how ridiculous the rift was and Randy realized it rapidly. So, they gave it a rest. Refreshing!"

The children of Ogema donated 500 pennies to the Penny Parade and are enjoying the *Prairie Town Activity Book[s]* they received. Perhaps Regent Nodeen will receive some *Turnip Tales* from them as they learn how to construct a story using alliteration. A Sandburg fan herself, Erma is hoping to find some paperback copies of *Rootabaga Stories* to send to these kids for their school library. (*Editor's note—CSHSA Book Store Chairman Rick Sayre ordered copies of Rootabaga Stories. Mrs. Nodeen now has her copies.*)

CARL SANDBURG'S MOTHER

(The following was contributed by CSHSA board member and former I&I editor Barbara Schock.)

She was born Clara Andersdatter in Apuna, Sweden. Her parents were farmers and gooseherds. Clara's mother died when she was only six years old. Clara grew up to be a fair-haired and blue-eyed woman who was five feet, five inches tall. She was calm and cheerful by nature. As soon as she earned enough money for passage to America, she bought a steerage ticket. Relatives near Bushnell, Illinois welcomed her when she arrived in 1873.

Clara started working as a maid at the hotel in Bushnell. August Sandburg worked for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, and they happened to meet. He had also been born in Sweden. They had a common language and background. August and Clara married August 7, 1874. Many years later Clara told her daughter Mary that she saw her chance to marry and took it. The same statement probably could have been said about August.

August had purchased a three-room house on East Third Street in Galesburg about a block from the railroad yard. Their first child, Mary, was born there on May 30, 1875. The second child, Carl, was also born in the cottage on January 6, 1878. There would be five more children, three boys and two girls.

In 1881 August purchased a ten-room house on Berrien Street. The Sandburg family used only a few rooms in the house. The others were rented to other families and individuals. The rent money helped pay the mortgage. In the winter the Sandburgs spent most of their time in the kitchen. It was the only room with a stove for heat and cooking. In that kitchen Clara lost two of her sons, Fred and Emil, to diphtheria.

Clara did her own housework, cooked the meals and kept her children clothed. She rose at 6 in the morning to prepare a good breakfast for her husband and children.

When times were bad during the Panic of 1893, Clara patched clothing and socks more than once. She made green tomato preserves. A bushel of green tomatoes cost only ten cents. When the preserves ran out, bread was spread with lard. A little salt was sprinkled on it to give some flavor. A garden was planted in the backyard and yielded much food for the family table in summer. Cabbages and potatoes were stored in the basement for winter use.

August didn't give praise to his children. His fear of want darkened his outlook on life, and belief in hard work didn't allow for wasting time saying nice words. Clara was always saying nice things and encouraging her children to learn. She showed her affection in many little ways and was patient with her husband and her children. There seemed to be a special bond between Clara and Carl.

Carl dedicated his first book of poetry, *In Reckless Ecstasy*, to his mother by describing her as "one who has kept a serene soul in a life of stress, wrested beauty from the commonplace, and scattered her gladness without stint or measure."

Over the years Clara wrote letters to her relatives in Sweden. She wrote without capital letters or punctuation describing her family's activities. Those letters were treasured in Sweden. In 1959 Carl visited his mother's birthplace and met some cousins. They showed his mother's letters to him. Those aging missives were full of details about life in Galesburg.

Clara was very proud of her son's accomplishments. Although she didn't understand all of the poems he wrote, she knew God had molded him into a successful person.

2012 CSHSA DUES

If you haven't paid your 2012 CSHSA dues yet, please pay them by May 1, 2012 using the form on the next page.

2012 CSHSA DUES

Please pay your 2012 CSHSA dues by May 1, 2012.
Mail your check made out to "Carl Sandburg Historic
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