Growing up in Westby, Wisconsin, a town where “even the dogs barked in Norwegian,” my ethnic heritage has been a core part of my being for as long as I can remember. I am honored to be the new President of NAHA, the organization which has for 85 years successfully chronicled the Norwegian-American immigrant experience and built an archive collection which serves as an invaluable resource to anyone interested in our past. We have long been recognized as the premier ethnic historic organization, and I am determined to build on what our past leaders, volunteers, members and friends have built for us.

We have charted some difficult waters of late. The economic collapse and accompanying blow to our endowments was a real challenge. Our membership continues to age, and the distances in time between the direct Norwegian-American experience grows more distant for most. We have transitioned from volunteer leadership to professional staff and experienced turnover and change in that staff.

I want to personally thank outgoing President Jack Tunheim for leading us through these challenging waters. The Honorable Judge Tunheim used his considerable legal and leadership skills to help frame a long-term agreement with St. Olaf College which resolved some longstanding issues and strengthened our opportunities. He was a strong and effective President, and I am personally gratified he will continue to serve on our Board to assist us going forward.

Also, I would like to recognize two outgoing Board members who were real assets to the organization: Bob Tollund of Bloomington, MN and Joan Buckley of Moorhead, MN. A sincere thank you also goes to our former employees Kim Holland and Catherine Cleland.

Our October 23 biennial meeting brought new signs of spirit and enthusiasm in the organization. We still have challenges, but there is a resounding belief among NAHA loyalists that we can succeed and grow for
Fremad! Continued

Looking Toward the Future

The Norwegian-American Historical Association has several large projects on the horizon. One of the most critical needs involves incorporating climate control within the archive stacks. In addition, new archive space has been identified within Rolvaag Library, becoming available as other departments and programs move into the newly renovated Tomson Hall. Once Tomson Hall relocations are complete, plans for Rolvaag renovations can move into the college planning queue.

Outfitting new archive space and incorporating climate control will involve a major investments for an organization the size of NAHA, but the opportunity to tackle both projects simultaneously creates the opportunity to realize savings versus splitting the project into separate phases.

Another major initiative involves creating and indexing electronic images of archive materials. Electronic imaging can be labor intensive and requires an investment in the technology to capture, store and retrieve images. The benefits, however, are immense. Fragile materials can be imaged once and then preserved in long term storage while the images remain accessible to researchers in far-flung

(Continued on page 3)
The eleventh seminar of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Norway Chapter, entitled “Migrant Journeys: The Norwegian-American Experience in a Multicultural Context” will be held on June 14–17, 2011, at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, USA. As its title suggests, the seminar welcomes a wide range of topics within Norwegian-American studies. We are particularly interested in papers on subjects related to emigration / immigration and the experience of the migrant in relation to the ethnic group, the host culture, and other ethnic cultures.

NAHA-Norway encourages seminar contributions based on many academic traditions. Topics related to literary, linguistic, and religious studies, to history, social science, fine and folk arts, and cultural studies—as well as multi- and interdisciplinary approaches—are appropriate. NAHA-Norway also emphasizes the need to see Norwegian-American Studies in the context of international migration and ethnic studies in general. Presentations may be delivered in English or Norwegian and, except for invited lecturers, should not exceed twenty minutes. We require an abstract in English for all presentations, including those given in Norwegian.

Prospective speakers are invited to submit a half-page proposal and a one-page CV to NAHA-Norway Chair Terje Hasle Joranger, Haslebråten, 2933 Reinli (tmh-jora@online.no) or Knut Djupedal, Director of The Norwegian Emigrant Museum and Research Center, 2312 Ottestad, Norway, (Knut.Djupedal@emigrantmuseum.no) by January 3, 2011.

Those who wish to attend the seminar without giving a paper should also notify NAHA-Norway Chair Terje Hasle Joranger at the above addresses to receive information (program, travel, accommodations, registration).

Norwegian-American Essays, Volume 13, will be published prior to the conference.

CALL FOR PAPERS

“Migrant Journeys: The Norwegian-American Experience in a Multicultural Context”

June 14–17, 2011, at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, USA

Proposals due Jan. 3, 2011
Heard the Gospel in the Death Camp at Andersonville—Book Excerpt

Torbjørn Greipsland’s latest book, “Norske pionerer i sju verdensdeler (Norwegian Pioneers in the Seven Regions of the World)” proves a fascinating study of Norwegian men and women, churches and congregations from such localities as Antarctica, Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Greenland, Hawaii, Israel, New Zealand, Spain, South Korea and USA.

His treatment of the USA includes chapters like Immigrants from Vest-Agder, Norway, Became Adventist Pioneers; Involvement and Creativity in Mindekirken; May Wigen Breivik – Active 90-year-old from Stavanger; Marie from Hafslo – Minnesota’s Mother Teresa – Gave Help to Thousands; and Amazing Growth in Youth Clubs Started by Art Rorheim.

With the coming 150th anniversary of the commencement of the Civil War in April 2011, Greipsland’s chapter, Heard the Gospel in the Death Camp at Andersonville (see below for an excerpt), is particularly interesting as it captures the tragic story of the Confederate prison camp.

The 294-page book may be ordered from the website www.emigrantforlaget.no ($35 with no postage fee). A portion of the book is in English.

Jeff Sauve, NAHA Archivist

Heard the Gospel in the Death Camp at Andersonville

More than 6,000 of the Norwegian immigrants fought in the American Civil War from 1861 to 1865. Of these six thousand, between 200 and 300 were held in horrendous prison camps. Most of these Norwegians were held in Confederate prison camps, but a few dozen were held in Union prison camps because several hundred Norwegians from Texas and other southern states were soldiers in the Confederate Army.

We will not call them pioneers—the men who fought in the war and those who were imprisoned in the death camps. However, they were the first to come to the realization that they had not come to only bright and good days in this land of promise, but rather to a time of war and horror, torture and death.

More than one hundred Norwegian soldiers were detained in the worst Confederate prison camp of them all, Andersonville in Georgia. Several have told about their horrendous experiences in this camp, including Osmund Johnson and Ole Steensland from Hjelmeland. Bjørn Aslaksen Svalastoga from Rauland wrote a long article about his confinement there. (Reprinted in the book Nordmenn i dødsleirene/Norwegian Soldiers in the Prison Camps during the American Civil War, by Torbjørn Greipsland, Emigrantforlaget 2005.)

During a ceremony on Memorial Day 2009, Norwegian soldiers who died in the Andersonville camp were, for possibly the first time, officially honored by Norway. Norwegian flags were placed at their grave markers. Colonel Ole Martin Hojem (pictured), from the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, placed a wreath at the monument in their memory. Torbjørn Greipsland spoke in remembrance of the Norwegian prisoners by telling some of their stories. Photo: Kevin Frye, Andersonville.

(Continued on page 5)
Like balsam
Most of the Norwegian immigrants in the USA heard the gospel preached in homes or churches, and among family members and friends in safe environments. However, this was not the case for all of them. Therefore, we want to reprint Aslaksen Svalastoga’s account describing conditions at Andersonville.

It is testimony to the fact that even in unbearable hunger and in the midst of the agony caused by torture, it did a person good to hear the message of Christ.

We quote from Aslaksen Svalastoga’s article: “In the midst of all this distress and wretchedness, we were not entirely left without a word of comfort and consolation, for quite often we would hear a word of comforting solace, and seldom has the word of God found more willing listeners. The message of Him who made the blind see, cleansed the lepers, and made whole the lame and the halt, was especially a gospel for the poor and miserable and was like a drink of living water to those thirsty and starved souls in this place of despair.

“A man by the name of W.S. Shippert from the 7th Ohio Regiment was an earnest, serious and Christian man. (I have heard that after the war he became a leading Baptist minister in Ohio.) His words of comfort were to many of us like balm on open sores, and when we heard of the unspeakable suffering and misery the people of Israel endured as portrayed by the Prophet when they were afflicted with sores from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet. “We were possessed of a blessed longing to hear the soul-saving Word. “All that thirst come to the Waters” and we experienced even here in this living hell, that above all things, it is blessed to belong to the Lord, and to know that He is mindful of man.

“Sometime during the month of August, something occurred that seemed to many of us to be supernatural or rather an Act of God as evidence of His compassion on us for the suffering we had to endure.

“The first of these happenings was a terrific rainstorm or cloudburst, which of course are not foreign to these parts. The little stream rose in a short time to a large flood, which carried away a large section of the stockade making a large opening through which it would have been possible for many prisoners to escape. However the Confederate guards with cannon were stationed in the opening so that our hope of escape was short-lived.

“The flood, however, was a blessing to the prison in that it swept the stream and the swamp clear of all its filth and contaminations, which had contributed more than anything else to the sickness, death, and misery of the prison.

“After this the stockade was also enlarged so that now there were not more than 1,000 men to each acre; however, what we believed to be a direct act of Divine Providence was that one morning the whole camp was surprised to find that during the night a spring of cold sweet water had broken out in the hillside within the stockade.

“Next to obtaining our liberty, nothing could have been more welcome. Nearly every man in the prison had acquired such an unconquerable loathing and distaste for the water in the old stream that they suffered the most severe thirst rather than to drink the stinking contaminated water.

“This God-sent fountain was soon taken over by the prison police to guard against contamination, and the men went there and waited in line to get their supply of clean, cold water.”

*Reprinted with permission*
On October 23rd, over seventy people passionate about the preservation of Norwegian-American history gathered on the St. Olaf College campus for a day of learning, inspiration, and celebration. Norwegian-American Historical Association members, board, staff, and guests met to hold NAHA’s 27th Biannual Members Meeting, and to celebrate NAHA’s 85 years of preservation and scholarship.

The day began with registration and music provided by Geitost, a local Norwegian folk ensemble, followed by a special welcome from outgoing NAHA President John R. Tunheim, archivist Gary DeKrey, and new administrative director Jackie Henry. Then the group was given the opportunity to attend the first round of learning sessions. Gary DeKrey and Dale Hovland led a helpful session on the resources available through NAHA and the internet for those doing family history research, and Betty A. Bergland from the University of Wisconsin shared wonderful stories of Norwegian-American women.

Over lunch, Dr. Joseph A. Amato gave an interesting presentation, entitled “A Promise and An Exigency: Rethinking Local and Family Histories”. Dr. Amato shared his own family stories and photographs, and read from several of his poetry collections. His message emphasized the deep importance of preserving our rich family and community histories. Following the talk, NAHA president John R. Tunheim and archivist Jeff Sauve gave special recognition to NAHA’s irreplaceable volunteers: Dale Hovland, Dale Haaland, Lee Rokke, Judy Sostad, and Sharon Jensen.

The afternoon held another set of learning sessions: Stories of NAHA Publications, led by Todd Nichol, and Stories from the Archives, led by Jeff Sauve. These were followed by the biennial membership meeting and a book fair and signing showcasing authors’ works on Norwegian-American history. The book fair was accompanied by a delicious birthday cake, and more time for guests to enjoy one another’s company and meet many of the incoming board members*. The entire day was a celebration of the achievements of the association, and an exciting look towards the future in which NAHA’s mission will continue.

-Laurel Kallman
NAHA Student Assistant

* A complete list of NAHA board members is located on pg. 11
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PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BIENNIAL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 23, 2010

Members gathered for the Luncheon and Keynote

Learning sessions were popular and well-attended

Geitost entertains as guests arrive

The book fair and author signing rounded out the day

Many new and returning board members were in attendance
WHAT’S IN A NAME?
BOOK REVIEW BY TODD NICHOL


If you are looking for just the right name for a new arrival or trying to explain the name of an earlier arrival, this is the book for you. If you do not need to do either, you might just enjoy browsing this engaging book now and then.

The first part of this book is a dictionary of Nordic names, divided into sections for names given to girls and boys. Try this quiz to sample what you can learn from this lexicon. No peeking at the answers below.

1. What was the name of the first woman to be created according to Nordic mythology?
2. What woman’s name became popular after it was used by Knut Hamsun in the novel, *Pan*?
3. What female name combines words for advice and battle?
4. What name for a boy originates in the Old Norse word for eagle?
5. What male name would be equivalent to “Curly” in English?
6. What name would designate a boy as a descendant of the god Thor?

A guide to pronunciation accompanies this section of the book -- although wise readers will know that American tongues and ears will settle this matter as they will.

The second portion of the handbook discusses patterns of occurrence, naming traditions, names featured in Nordic mythology, and other historical topics. An appealing feature of this section is that it considers not only data from the Nordic countries but material from immigrant populations in North American as well. Some of this material is based on original research and some of it summarizes the work of earlier scholars. It is both an interesting and informative compendium of information that most readers will likely consult in as interest dictates. It will be an enjoyable search for most readers.

Serendipitous discoveries for the reader wait in every section of the book. If you have yet to discover the pleasures of names or if this is a well into which you have already dipped, this book will delight you.
Thanks to everyone who has made a recent donation to the NAHA Archives. We aren’t able to acknowledge every donation in the newsletter, but we do appreciate every single one of them! Our collection grows in volume and importance thanks to the generosity of our members and contributors.

Recent additions to the manuscripts collection include:
- **Aandahl Family Collection.** Donated by Mrs. Louise Stockman. Over 150 letters, 1882-1906, both American and Norwegian, from parents and other relations of Fred Aandahl, governor of ND in the 1950s, whose family settled in Barnes County, ND.
- **Olav Lee Family Collection.** Donated by Vivian Engebrit. Extensive genealogical materials (2000 index cards) of the Olav Lee and F. A. Schmidt families. Also contains catalogued photo albums from the 1880s to the 1920s, maps, and cemetery notations.
- **Anders Bratlien Peterson Collection.** Donated by family of Stephen P. Serkland. Extensive personal and business papers of the founder of Rothsay, MN and of the Sigdals Lag. Includes hundreds of family letters, extensive records of Peterson’s general store in Rothsay, and some political and government records from Wilkin County. Also newspapers, photographs, postcards, and drafts of Peterson’s published work, including his novel.
- **Laddie (Gladys) Lund Hughes Collection.** Donated by Laddie (Gladys) Lund Hughes. Three boxes of personal papers and family histories of Minnesota-born California political figure, nurse, and member of U.S. President’s Committee on National Medal of Science.

Recent books and theses accepted as donations include:
- **Langland, Rolf H. Descendants of Sølfest Langeland (1818-1900) and Ingeborg Brekhus (1828-1899) through Generations 13/14, Version 3.1.** Monterey, California, 2009. Donated by the author.

We continue to collect Norwegian-American letters, diaries, photographs, family histories, and community and congregational material; and we are especially interested in collecting items that reflect the experiences of post-World War II immigrants. We do not generally collect Norwegian books, but we do collect Norwegian-American family histories, rare Norwegian language books published in the US, booklets about localities and churches associated with Norwegian-Americans, and bygdebøker that are not already in the St. Olaf College collection.
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Newly elected board members are in italics.
FROM THE FRONT DESK

At the time I learned that NAHA was looking for a new administrative director, I was on the a two week road trip that included visits to the places my Norwegian-American great and great-great grandparents inhabited during their time on earth. From Madison, Minnesota through Yellowstone National Park, to Sydney, Montana and Plaza, North Dakota we visited historical societies, museums, cemeteries, homesteads, home sites and churches in a deeply satisfying and eye-opening trek across the Midwest prairie. I immediately emailed the HR director and asked her to please keep the job posting open until I had a chance to return and get my application in. This was an opportunity that spoke to me on a visceral level.

Now I’ve been in the position for three months and I couldn’t be more pleased with my decision. In addition to the satisfaction of supporting the mission of NAHA in locating, collecting, preserving and interpreting the Norwegian-American experience, I’m also able to put to use the many skills I’ve acquired in my professional career. This is an opportunity to put all of those skills to use supporting and fostering the growth of an organization that has quickly become near and dear to my heart.

I’m excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for NAHA. My long term goals include outreach to attract new members and new sources of support, exploring new avenues of communication, new means to deliver published materials, new research tools and new partnerships with other organizations that share our mission. Everything we do will build on the foundation of excellence put into place 85 years ago.

-Jackie Henry
Administrative Director