

# NORDIC AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

AUGUST 1998

## 2 ND ANNUAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 1998

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### Making a

### Psalmodikon

When Beatrice Hole mentioned that she had plans for the making of a Psalmodikon - something made me want to see if I could indeed make my own Psalmodikon. Selecting Spruce for the top and bottom and pine for the sides I constructed not one - but two Psalmodikons - one for Deann and one for myself. The original plan was modified only in the way the strings were attached to the tuning pegs.

Daniel Larson made the gut strings for the Psalmodikons and the instruments are unusual in that there are two strings on each instrument.. See the photo at far right.

Larry Gjenvick

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The 2nd Annual meeting of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet will be held in Granite Falls, Minnesota on Saturday, September 19, 1998.

The meeting, workshop, programs and dinner will be held in the Conference Room at the Super 8 Motel located on Highway #212 in Granite Falls.

*THE ANNUAL  
MEETING -  
A TIME OF  
SHARING,  
LEARNING,  
ENJOYMENT  
FELLOWSHIP!*

For those of you who want to stay overnight, the

Super 8 Motel is offering a discount for lodging when you mention that you are with the Psalmodikon folks. For Reservations call toll free 1-800-800-8000 or (320) 564-4075 directly to the Super 8 Motel in Granite Falls.

The meeting will start at 1:00 PM with a greeting from the Mayor of Granite Falls followed by a brief business meeting.

Daniel Larson of Duluth, will present his story of how he goes about making the sheep-gut strings, which everyone will find to be very interesting.

The remainder of the afternoon will be spent practicing Psalmodikon music and fellowship. Dinner will be served at 5:30 PM followed by a musical program in the evening



Psalmodikons made by Larry Gjenvick

at 7:30. Hopefully there will be some Psalmodikon players willing to perform during the program. In addition to the Psalmodikon music, Kathy Dantzer-Olson from Dawson, Minnesota will be performing on the Langeleik, a Norwegian folk instrument and Laurie Dikkon of Granite Falls will be entertaining the group with some "peppy" accordion music. It will be a fun-filled day!!

The Lutheran Church in Granite Falls has asked that some of the Psalmodikon players participate in the Sunday morning worship service also.

Both the afternoon and evening programs are open to anyone who would like to come. There is much to be learned from attending these meetings and entertain-



ing as well. So spread the word, bring a friend, the more the merrier~!!

It would be helpful to the staff to know how many to plan for on Saturday the 19th. Please contact by a note either to Larry Gjenvick, 1775 - 214th Avenue N W, Cedar, MN 55011-9254 or Beatrice Hole, 6560 Leesborough Avenue, Eden Prairie, MN 55346-2823 and let them know you will be there for the meeting. Please do this no later than September 10th. Thanks for your help to make this meeting a memorable event.

## NOTES OF INTEREST

Paul Knivslund has been busy building Psalmodikons for all the interested folks that would like to have a Psalmodikon of their own. Just recently he completed making **NO. 25!** That one went to Mrs. Millard Johnson at Wolverton, Minnesota. Welcome to our group, Mrs. Johnson

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From Beatrice Hole:  
Recently Rodger and I had the pleasure of meeting and visiting with a very unique craftsman, Daniel Larson of Duluth, MN. His business goes by the name of "Gamut Musical Strings" and they sell strings all over the USA and even to some of the foreign countries. He gave us a most interesting tour of his work place, which was an education in itself. Daniel told us how he acquires the sheep gut, the whole process of curing, shaping and drying the strings into different sizes for the various instruments, even Psalmodikons!

Daniel has offered to be a guest on our program for the Psalmodikonforbundet on September 19th. He will be demonstrating as well as showing slides on this most interesting occupation of making sheep-gut strings. We are so fortunate to know of someone right here in Minnesota that is still involved in this very old skill.

Invite your friends for this most interesting program.

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A warm welcome to all of the new members of the Psalmodikonforbundet. Our group is a unique way of preserving and passing along to future generations a piece of our heritage that otherwise could be lost.

It's also never too late to become a member - and don't forget a gift membership - several have become members via this way. Membership is easy - an annual dues of \$5.00 brings you our little newsletter several times a year with informative articles and news about our Annual meeting.

Just send your \$5.00 membership fee to either Larry Gjenvick or

Beatrice Hole.

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We still have a few copies of the Video Tape program with Beatrice Hole demonstrating the Psalmodikon. We will have them at the Annual meeting at a nominal cost.

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Is the music coming from your Psalmodikon sounding a bit dull? Perhaps you are in need of a new string. They do seem to become "dead" after quite a bit of playing and a new string works wonders!

A steel guitar string .016 can be purchased at any music store or perhaps you would like to have an authentic sheep-gut string as was used on the original Psalmodikons. These may be purchased from Daniel Larson at Gamut Music Strings, 26 N. 28th Avenue East, Duluth, MN 55812 (218) 724-8011.

Or better yet, if you want to save postage — strings will be on sale during our Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet on September 19th in Granite Falls.

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Are you getting tired of playing the Psalmodikon with a violin bow? Here is a fun little folk tune that works real well to pluck the melody.

### PÅL SINE HØNER

1 1 3 | 5 5 3 | 6 6 4 | 5 5

4 4 2 | 3 3 1 | 2 2 7 | 1 || Repeat

5 3 | 1 1 3 | 2 2 1 7 5

5 3 | 1 1 3 | 2 2 1 7 5

1 1 3 | 5 5 6 6 4 | 5 5

4 4 2 | 3 3 3 1 | 2 2 7 1 ||

Written in Sifferskrift for Psalmodikon av Beatrice Hole - 1997

The melody is written without timing because this is a well-known song.

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## NOTES FROM MUSIG-ON-A-STRING

My mentor, Harlis Anderson, often said as his life was coming to a close “I wish I could have another ten years—there is so much left to do with keeping the Psalmodikon tradition going”

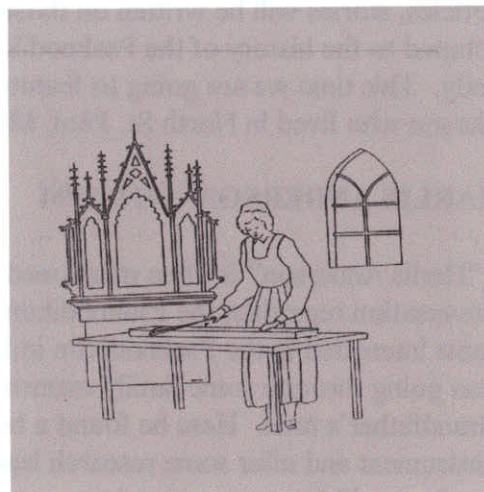
Not only did he pass the 1867 Psalmodikon on to me but also his knowledge of music, history, etc. And so I have felt that it was now my turn to “carry on the tradition”. I have found my new “career” to be very interesting and yet I feel I have some pretty big shoes to fill. I always meet so many fine folks and receive so much support as I travel about giving programs and demonstrating on the Psalmodikon. But often times I think of Harlis and wish he could be “reaping the benefits” along with me.

Harlis would have been proud to see all the young campers at Skogfjorden (the Norwegian Language Village) near Bemidji, MN play those Psalmodikons! In June I was invited up there to teach a class on Psalmodikons. Preparation was a project in itself as I had to write all the curriculum (most of it was stored in my head and not on paper) plus rewrite music into Sifferskrift to enable them to play in the authentic manner. I brought along all eight of my Psalmodikons and what a delight it was to see those young folks taking turns and with eager little fingers placed on the fretboards practicing their favorite tunes. And to think they had the courage to put on a program for all their peers in the evening!

At the end of June I was invited to participate at the Hjemkomst Festival in Moorhead, MN. What an honor it is to be playing the Psalmodikon right next to the Hjemkomst ship that was built in a neighboring potato warehouse and then making the voyage all the way to Norway. I grew up in that area of the Red River Valley and so it is like “old home” week to me as I visit with all those in attendance. But I often think of how many times Harlis wrote letters to the Hjemkomst people asking if they would need some Psalmodikon music. Now I have the pleasure of receiving an invitation every year!

The Nordic Fest was always the high point of the year for Harlis and I. Now I make the trip solo but in a sense not. For there again there are all those won-

derful people to support me as someone joins me on stage to sing along (often times in Norwegian) or accompany me with a guitar, auto-harp and even the



longeik! It warms the cockles of my heart as the audience, on their own free-will join the Psalmodikon in singing “My God, How Great Thou Art”. If only Harlis could be there to hear that!

But most of all — Harlis would not only be amazed but very proud of all you folks that make up our Psalmodikon organization. What a great response we have had in membership and I want to thank all of you for sending in your Membership dues so promptly. There is always room for more so tell your friends about us and invite them to become members of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet, too. Remember, you do not need to own a Psalmodikon to be a member. Velkommen og Tusen Takk til Alt!

A lot of my time is taken up with correspondence, some as a result of the Internet, and that makes each day so exciting. I want to thank each of you for your letters and phone calls as well as those of you who keep me informed on your latest findings in our search for more Psalmodikon history. My file is starting to bulge!

I am looking forward to seeing all of you in Granite Falls on September 19. In the meantime - - keep practicing!!