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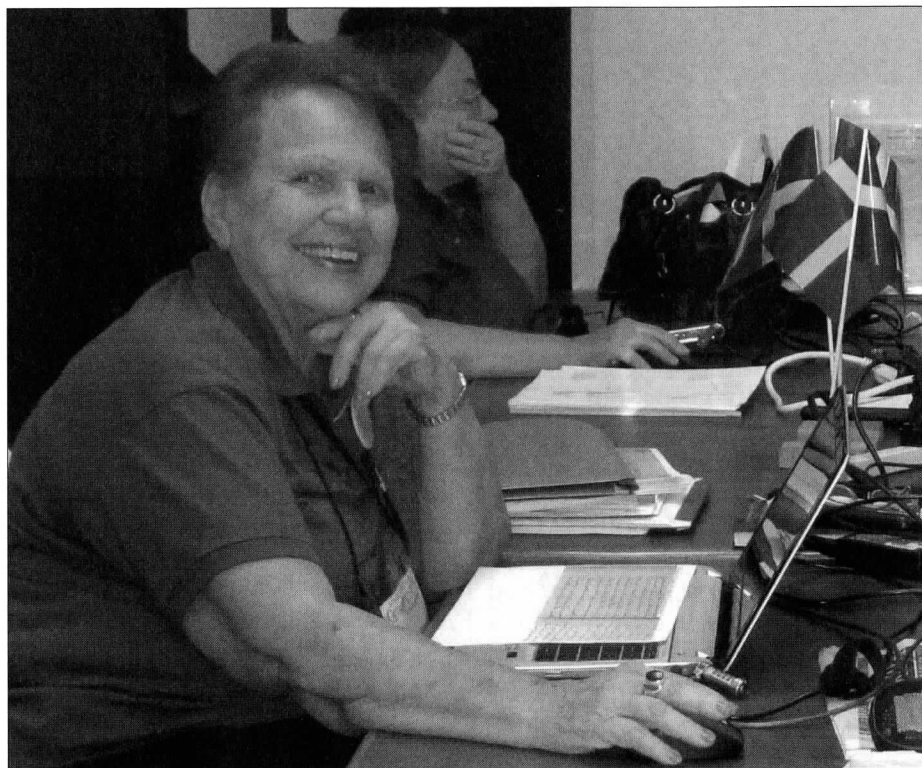
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# In Memoriam: Priscilla Sorknes 1932–2014



Priscilla at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City during the SAG Workshop in 2013. In the back: Laura Reich. (Photo: E. Thorsell).

Our dear friend *Priscilla Sorknes Grefsrud* passed away at her winter home in Sedona, AZ, on 31 December 2014, and is deeply missed by her family, son Mark “Nate” Nathaniel Grefsrud, daughter Pauline Gustafson, their spouses, grandchildren, and many friends in the U.S., Norway, and Sweden.

Priscilla was born in Moorhead, MN, where she now rests beside her husband Earl Grefsrud (1928–2012) a former pastor in the Mindekirken in Minneapolis.

Priscilla first worked as a teacher (English and/or German), and also taught piano lessons. Later she worked in a publishing house and then she found her true passion in genealogy. She was active in the re-activation of the *Solørslag of America*, about 30 years ago. This story was told in a book: *Vi er Solunger!: the*

*beginnings of Solørslag in America*, that she published in 2011 with Caroline Herfindahl, and others.

Priscilla was fluent in Norwegian and Swedish, which was a big help when she took groups to Norway and also to the “slash-and-burn” Finn areas on the border of Sweden and Norway.

The Norwegian roots were closest to her heart, but she also had ancestors in Skåne in southern Sweden, where she visited with cousins.

In 1994 Priscilla joined forces with Nils William Olsson and became a vital part of the *Swedish American Genealogist Workshop*, that is still held every fall in Salt Lake City.

Priscilla taught classes in deciphering Gothic script a script that was used by the Swedish clergy until the early 1800s.

It was a joy to meet with Priscilla

and Earl in Salt Lake City when she was helping people with difficult documents, and he quietly reading his paperback novels in a calm corner. As a pastor he had had more than his share of church records.

One year my husband and I also visited with Priscilla and Earl at their summer home by Lake Viola in Wisconsin, and had a good time with caring hosts. It was a new part of the U.S. for us, and we enjoyed seeing hummingbirds and learning about the local flora.

We always talked about genealogy together, so I never saw the handicraft side of her, but she is said to have been a master knitter, especially of Norwegian sweaters, and also doing needlepoints and much more.

Priscilla was a person with a warm heart, and a fine understanding of other people, and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

*Elisabeth Thorsell*

## **A SAG Workshop member shares her feelings:**

I will miss your kindness and your sweet nature and your beautiful smile. You made everyone at the SAG Workshop feel that you loved us, and we loved you back. It is hard to bear that we won't see you again, but now you are with your beloved Earl. (We loved him too.) You will be remembered as a wonderful person.

Thank you for your wonderfully helpful handwriting lessons where you would explain that some scribbled and undecipherable letter was a beautiful example of a Gothic *a*. I learned so much about Gothic writing from you, although you were far better at reading it than any of us could hope to become.

My sympathies go out to your children and other family members.

By *Judy Olson Baouab* 7 Jan. 2015 on Facebook.