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News from the Swenson Center

BY JILL SEAHOLM

The Swenson Center has been bustling with visitors in the last few months.

In April 2005, *Stenåke Pettersson*, manager of the House of Genealogy in Leksand, Sweden, came to visit while traveling in the U.S. He had a behind-the-scenes tour of the Swenson Center and spent the morning talking with Jill about the genealogical resources and services of their two research centers. See p.23.

Dr. *Kjell O. Lejon* of Linköping, Sweden, visited the Swenson Center in April. Dr. Lejon is an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church of Sweden and professor of church history at Linköping University. On April 9 he presented a lecture at Augustana College titled: "Changing Religious Landscape: Folk, Church, and Folkchurch in Sweden."

Dr. Lejon's research interests are: Swedish church history, and American religion and politics. On April 11 he toured the Swenson Center with his academic advisee, Rev. Dr. David M. Gustafson of Moline who is a regular academic researcher at the Swenson Center. Dr. Lejon, in cooperation with the Vasa Order Lodge Conference at Bishop Hill, officiated at a Swedish worship service on Sunday, April 10, at the historic Jenny Lind Chapel in Andover, Illinois. For information about Dr. Lejon, you may visit his website at: www.liu.se/irk/religion/inst/lejon.htm

For a week in mid-June, a group of Swedish tourists from around Västerås were in Rock Island. While touring Augustana College one day, they stopped at the Swenson Center for a quick tour. They were brought

to the U.S. by a man named *Svante Strömberg*, who is a travel guide and has a weekly travel show on Radio Västmanland in Sweden. Together with Mrs. *Lilly Setterdahl* of East Moline, author of the book *Swedes in Moline*, he took his group to various sites in this area, including Andover and Bishop Hill. One of the Swedes had an ancestor who was an original Bishop Hill colonist and he was able to see his ancestor's name on a microfilm at the Swenson Center. The group also attended and participated in Augustana's American Scandinavian Association Midsommar program held at First Lutheran Church in Rock Island. The evening included a potluck supper, and dancing around the *midsommar* pole, and they even performed a couple of Swedish songs for the audience, such as the old tearjerker, *Hälsa dem därhemma*. At the end of the evening was a concert given by the two scholarship winners from the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. This year's winner of the Jenny Lind Scholarship was *Mia Karlsson*, soprano, and the Accompaniment Scholarship went to *Jonas Olsson*, pianist. They performed Grieg, Stenhammar, and Chopin, among many others.

Yves Matras, a graduate student at the University of Toulouse in France, was at the Swenson Center. Early in his career he taught math in some French and U.S. universities, but most of his professional career was spent in research centers in the nuclear, telecommunications, and aerospace industries. He retired several years ago, and was at the Swenson Center for about two weeks

in June working on his master's thesis on Swedish immigrant choruses and music in the U.S.

M. Matras happened to be in Rock Island during the above-mentioned *Midsommar* celebration and was able to observe Swedish immigrant music first-hand, and even participated in the potluck supper and helped to decorate the *midsommar* pole with flowers!

In June and July, *Martha Lundholm Jansson* from Karlstad, Sweden, was here doing research partially funded by the *Moline Swedish Friendship Association*. In 2004 Swenson Center student employee *Karen O'Quin* spent the summer as an intern at the Emigrant Register/Kinship Center in Karlstad, and to complete the exchange, Mrs. Jansson came here this year. She is originally from Rock Island and has worked at the Emigrant Register for the last 26 years. She is currently pursuing her master's degree from the College of Library and Information Science (*Bibliotekshögskolan*) in Borås. She was at the Swenson Center working on tracing the Moline descendants of the emigrants from Bjurtjärn parish in Värmland, Sweden.

Please note that the Swenson Center has a new web URL since the Spring. The URL is now
www.augustana.edu/swenson/