

Swedish Roots in Oregon

An Immigration Research Project



December 2016 Newsletter

Editor: Rhonda Erlandson

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Swedishrootsinoregon.org

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Your donation is tax deductible and supports research into the lives and history of Swedish immigrants in Oregon.

President's Message: It's All About Stories

In a *Scientific American* article dated May 8, 2013, entrepreneur and inventor Jag Bhalla writes, "It is in our nature to need stories. They are our earliest sciences, a kind of people-physics. Their logic is how we naturally think. They configure our biology, and how we feel, in ways long essential for our survival...Like our language instinct, a story drive—an inborn hunger for story hearing and story making—emerges untutored universally in healthy children. Every culture bathes their children in stories to explain how the world works and to engage and educate their emotions."

As a librarian, stories are my life-blood. I can't remember a time when I wasn't reaching out for the next story. Whether others read to me or I read to myself, or whether my imagination simply took flight on its own magic carpet of tall tales. I've lived, loved, and learned from stories all of my life. I expect that is true for you as well.

Christmas time in my family was always especially rich with stories. My mother read the Christmas story to us at home and we heard it again each week in Sunday school. We acted out stories on the stage in our elementary schools, and we fell asleep with a book on our lap as we nestled all snug in our beds. The season was alive with giant stars, jolly elves, wise kings, and flying reindeer.

I remember one storied Christmas as particularly magical because we actually had a dusting of snow on the ground. A white Christmas is rare in these parts of the Pacific Northwest and so, as a 6-year-old, I was certain this Christmas would be unusually auspicious with regard to a certain sleigh delivery I was expecting. It was dark when we arrived at my Swedish grandparents' home on Christmas Eve. I climbed out of the backseat of our warm car and gazed at the stars, searching – through the fog of my own breath as it mingled with the chilly atmosphere – for any sign of those eight tiny reindeer. Turning toward the house, I could see the brightly lit kitchen window completely steamed over from all the cooking my grandmother was doing. I could hear voices and laughter inside and could already smell the lutfisk. And when the door opened to my grandparents' home, I stepped into the wonderland of an authentic Swedish Christmas. Much of the sights, sounds, food and festivity that we discover at Scan Fair were present in those Christmases of my childhood. Also present were stories of long ago yuletides experienced by my father when he was a little boy living in an enchanted land way up North, not too far from where I imagined Santa must live.

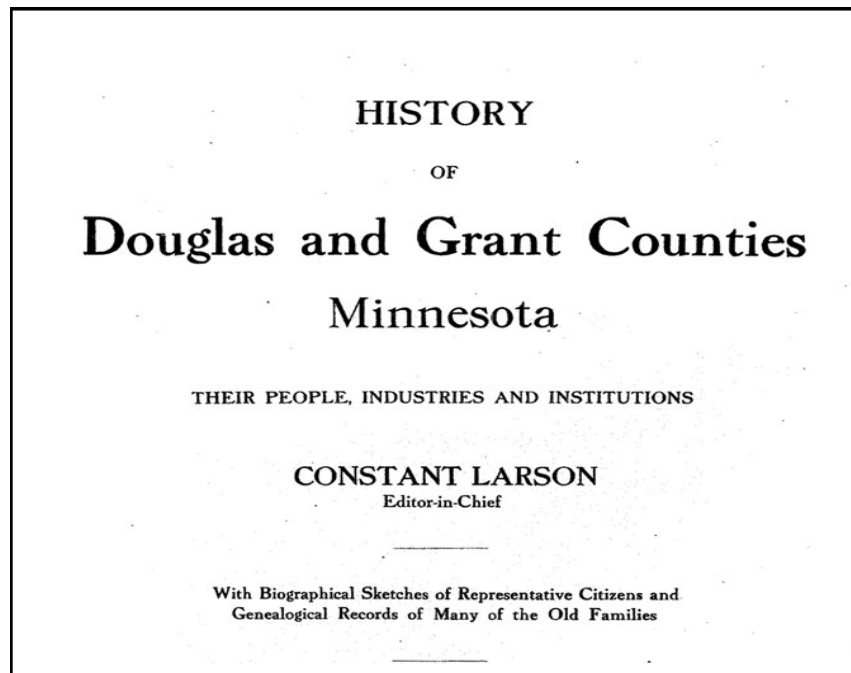
Continued on page -10-



The Genealogy Corner

by Ann Stuller

This past summer I happened to meet two very nice sisters, Ann and Mary, when I took a workshop at Sitka Center on the Oregon coast. The subject of Sweden came up during an introductory session when I mentioned that I had taught Swedish for Portland Community College for a number of years. Their maternal grandparents were originally from Sweden but they knew relatively little about their origins. Ann and Mary had recently been to Sweden but had no known relatives. I explained about Swedish Roots in Oregon and said that I would try to help them with their family tree if they would supply me with names and dates. Mary sent me a section from a local history which included an article about their maternal grandfather, Peter Streed.



With the hopes of using this biographical sketch, I anticipated that the task ahead of me would be fairly straight forward. I soon discovered that many of the "facts" were blocks to discovery as I began a rather zigzag journey which eventually led to finding living relatives in Sweden for Ann, Mary, and their brother. Local and family histories can be an asset but they can also be very misleading.

On August 22, 1908, Peter Streed was united in marriage to Mrs. Anna Dahlstrom, widow of Fred Dahlstrom. Before her marriage to Mr. Dahlstrom she was Anna Johnson, a native of Sweden, who came to the United States early in life. To Mr. and Mrs. Streed one child has been born, Edith Henrietta, whose birth occurred on July 10, 1909. By her first marriage Mrs. Streed was the mother of five children, Agnes, Freda, Minnie, Lillian and Edna, all of whom are at home. Agnes and Freda Dahlstrom are teachers, the former teaching at district No. 62 and the later in the consolidated school at Milona.

I'll begin with the first part of the sketch: starting with the name Streed, I knew that it was not a Swedish name. However it sounds like a Swedish military name, Strid, meaning battle. Normally a soldier received a different name if someone in his regiment had the same name, i.e. Andersson, Johansson, and the new name often reflected that person's characteristics. I primarily used Ancestry's Swedish church records and searched by birthdate looking for a Peter born in the area around Malmö since the sisters had mentioned he came from that area. I also looked for death records for his parents and his siblings other than Herman. No luck. So then I worked from the US records, and found Peter's middle initial was J. and then I knew to look for a Peter Johan (a common combination) who had siblings named Herman, Ida, Alfred, and Anna.

Since the biographical sketch said that Peter was 18 when he emigrated, I looked in the shipping lists where I found a Petter Joh. Strid age 20, and from then on I really questioned the accuracy of the biographical sketch. The entry on the shipping list also identified Peter's home area, Lenhovda, Kronobergslän. Again using the Swedish church records, chiefly the house census (*husförhör*), I was able to trace Peter back in time and found his mother's name was Anna Strid and his step-father's name was August Fransson. Before his military service he was Peter Johan Fransson and afterwards, he became Peter Johan Strid. His siblings had the last name of Fransson, and I eventually found Alfred and Ida and their descendents some of whom remain living in Sweden today.

The search for Anna Johnson was also complex but was eased once Edith Henrietta's birth record revealed Anna's maiden name was not Johnson but Komstead and Edna's record stated Komstedt. Also Anna's death index showed her middle name was Marie: thus Anna Maria Komstedt could be traced in Swedish church records and emigration records and in U.S. records as Anna Komstedt Dahlström Streed.

So as a reminder to those of you who may face "brick walls", source materials may help but they also may be error-riddled.

PETER STREED

Peter Streed, a native of Sweden and one of the successful and well-known farmers of Carlos township, Douglas county, was born on August 2, 1870, the son of August and Anna Streed, both of whom were natives of Sweden. The parents have spent their lives in their native country, where the father is engaged in farming. They are the parents of five children, Herman, Ida, Alfred, Anna and Peter. Herman came to the United States and engaged in mining in Colorado, where he died some years ago. The rest of the family, besides the subject of this sketch, are still residents of the land of their births.

Peter Streed received his early schooling in his native land and attended night school after coming to the United States. He was eighteen years of age when he decided to locate in America. On landing in this country, he came directly to Minnesota, locating in Chisago county, where he was engaged as a farm hand for a year. He then went to Idaho, with an uncle.

NEW! From SWEDISH ROOTS IN OREGON PRESS

Travel along with Carl Johan Larson, an Oregon dairy farmer who came to America as a young boy in 1869 at the peak of the Great Migration, when more than a million Swedes left their homeland in search of new lives. In 1920, accompanied by his daughter and her friend, Larson set out to see the world. And that they did. By train, auto, ship, donkey, camel, ferry, and on foot.

From the fiery rim of Mount Vesuvius to the top of the Great Pyramid of Giza; from a silent night in Bethlehem to the land of the Midnight Sun, this is the very personal story—translated to English for the first time—of Swedish emigrants abroad in the early aftermath of World War I. Moreover, it is the remarkable story of Larson's immigrant experience and pursuit of his deepest desires: to see the Holy Land and to again set foot on Swedish soil.

Available for
purchase at
AMAZON.COM

PACIFIC OCEAN



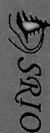
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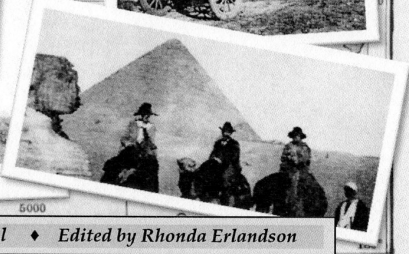
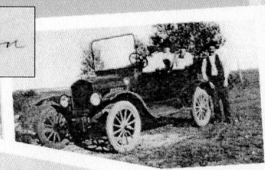
ACROSS
SIXTEEN
COUNTRIES

G. J. Larson



ACROSS SIXTEEN COUNTRIES

An account of what was seen and heard
on the author's journey to historic and interesting places
in sixteen countries in the years of 1920–21.



Translated by Mike Timshel ♦ Edited by Rhonda Erlandson

Meet the contributors to ***Across Sixteen Countries***



Translator

Originally from southern California, Michael Timshel has now lived in the Willamette Valley in Oregon for more than thirty years. His father was a Swedish immigrant, and he has had a life-long interest in the Swedish language and culture. His employment at the University of Oregon afforded him the opportunity to study and improve his Swedish language skills. In retirement, he now has more time to devote to translation.



Editor

The daughter of a Swedish immigrant, Rhonda Erlandson grew up surrounded by the beauty of Swedish culture and the musical cadence of its language. Like C. J. Larson, she too has roots in Warren, Oregon. A professional librarian for the past 23 years, Rhonda lives in Portland, Oregon, and currently serves as the President of Swedish Roots in Oregon.



Associate Editor

Tricia Brown joined the C.J. Larson family in 1986 when she wed C.J.'s grandson and Naomi Larson Brown's son, Perry Brown. She is an author, editor, and book developer specializing in Alaska titles, and was thrilled to join the publishing team for *Across Sixteen Countries*.

Swedish Roots in Oregon Press gratefully acknowledges the support and contributions of the Larson family, Bethany Lutheran Church, Les Watters and the Columbia County Museum Association, designer Sophie Aschwanden, cartographer Penny Panlener, and Ooligan Press Editor, Abbey Gaterud of Portland State University. We also extend deepest gratitude to Ingeborg Dean.



Bethany Lutheran Church Records

by David A. Anderson



Swedish genealogists know how lucky they are in having ancestors in Sweden where the Lutheran state church was responsible for keeping track of everyone. And they did a most excellent job, one

that most people living today are happy to have as a record of their ancestors' lives. The *Husförhörslängd*, or household survey, is part of that treasure trove of historical records with which we can follow most people throughout their lives from cradle to grave.

SRIO has been fortunate enough to be able to inspect and extract data from Bethany Lutheran's "Record of Church Members" book. Much of the basic information from this record book is now in our database online in notes and records of individuals:

<http://www.sweame.org/gateway/states/oregon/oregondata.html>

Although not quite as complete as its Swedish counterparts, these records are a very important source of data about members of Bethany Lutheran's membership. One of those members, and a charter member of Bethany Lutheran, Warren is C.J. Larson. C.J. (or Carl Johan or Charles John) kept an amazing account of his travels abroad, and it is the translated record of his trip in 1920-21 that SRIO is proud to be publishing.

In the entry for C.J., and his family, we learn that he was a charter member of Warren Lutheran Church. Although specifically recorded we learn that he moved to the parish from Portland in 1907 and was received as a member of the church on Jan 9, 1907. He and his wife, Signe Alice, were married on Jan 1, 1922, the location of the wedding not specified.

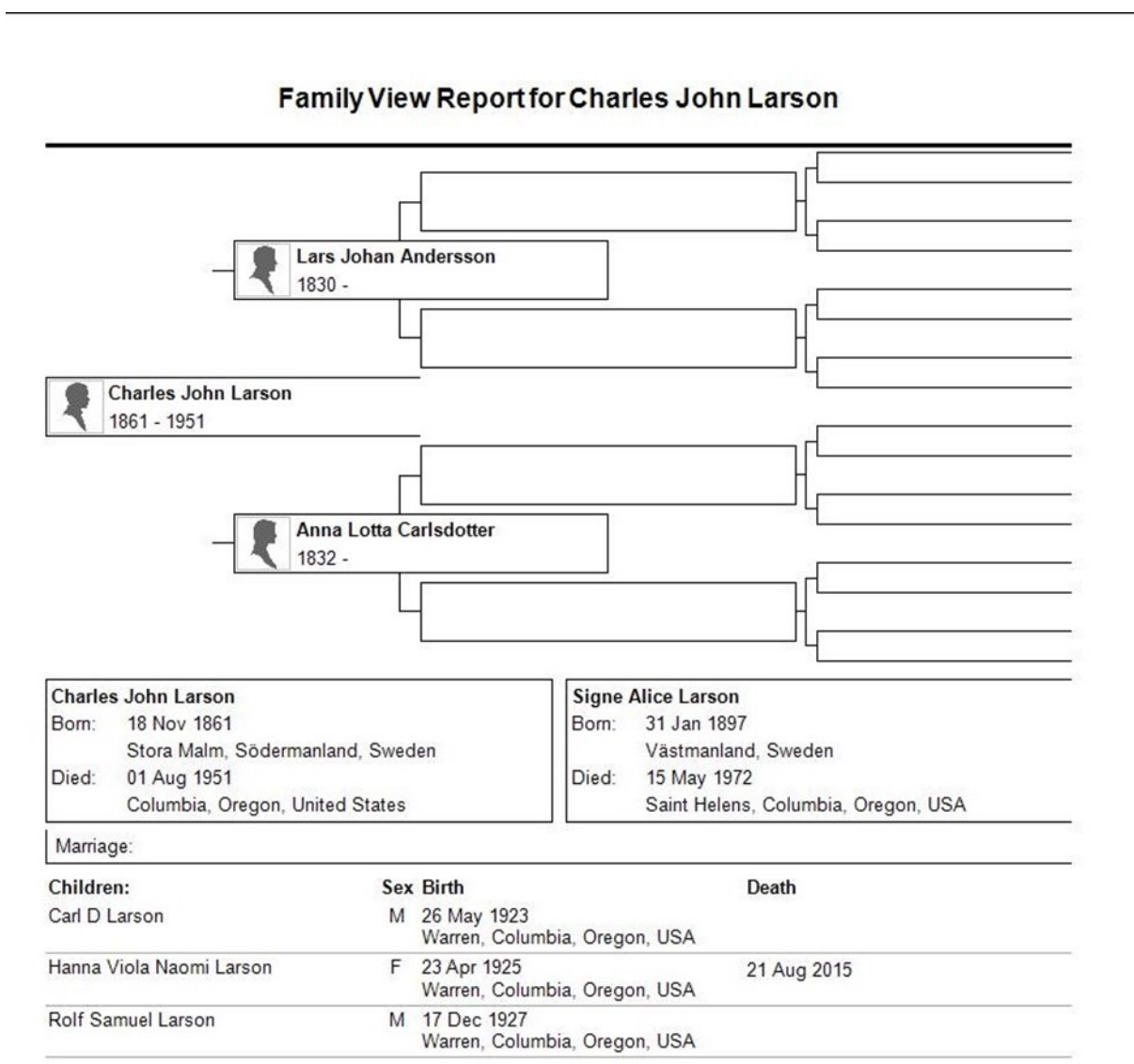
The place of birth for C.J., his wife, who are born in Sweden, and their three children: Carl Daniel, Hanna Viola Naomi and Rolf Samuel, who are all born in Warren are recorded, as are baptisms, confirmations, received into membership, and a date of death (for C.J.).

Name and address	Birth place	Birth date	Baptized
Agnes Matilda	Hveta, Kalmarlän, Sw.	June 6 1868	
Larson, Carl Johan	Stora Malm, Södermanland, Sw.	Nov. 19 1861	
Larson, Signe Alice	Västernorrlands län	Jan. 31 1897	
Carl Daniel	Warren, Ore.	May 26 1923	June 17 1923
Hanna Viola Naomi	" "	Apr. 23 1925	May 17 1925
Rolf Samuel	" "	Dec. 17 1927	Jan. 15 1928
Hellberg, Hilda Elizabeth	Lyckebo, Västervik		

Carl Johan Larson's family notes, pg 1, "Record of (Bethany Lutheran) Church Members, Warren

Confirmation	Marriage	Arrived from and year	Received	Death	Remarks
	Jan 1 1922	Portland, Ore 1907	Jan 9 1907	8 1 1951	Charter member.
	" " "		Dec. 8 1912		
23	Aug. 28 1938				See Page 21
25	May 12 1940				See 27
28	May 9 1943				

Carl Johan Larson's family notes, pg 1, "Record of (Bethany Lutheran) Church Members, Warren (facing page).



We are very thankful for the opportunity to inspect the Bethany Lutheran record book.

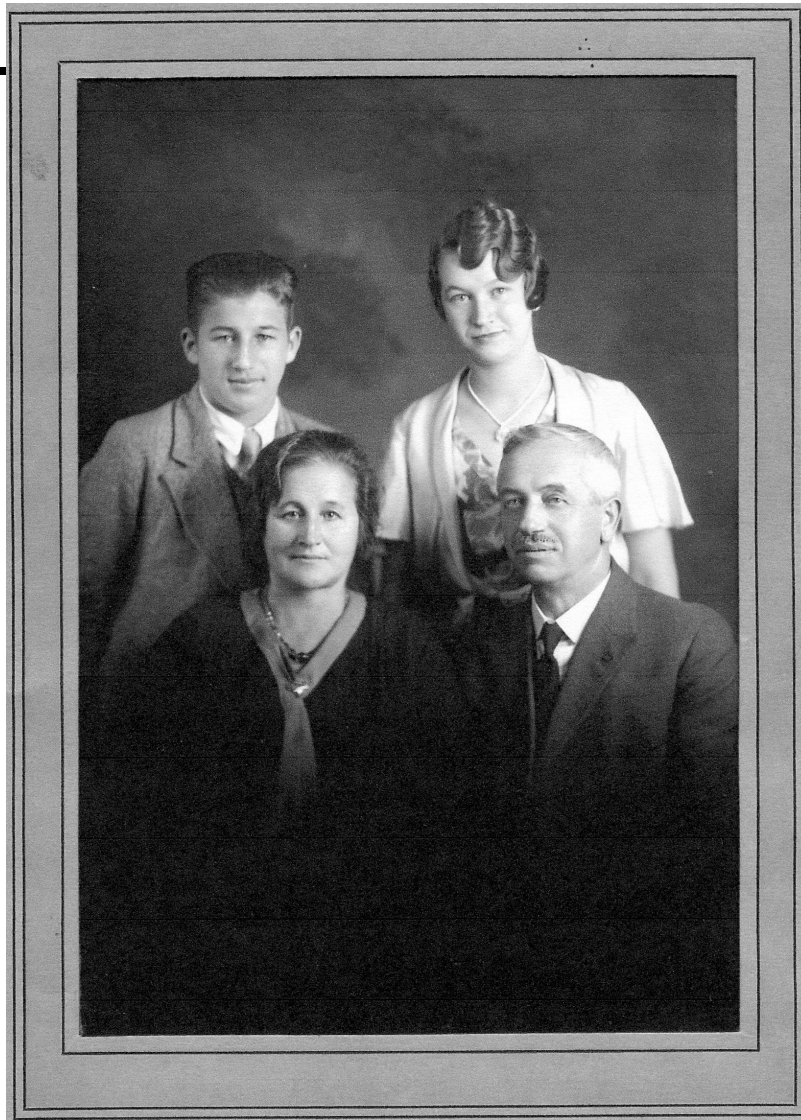
Excerpted from

Alma Nygren Janisch

Traces of a Swedish Immigrant's Life in Portland, OR

by Ingeborg Dean

Between 1851 and 1925, 44,533 people left the province of Dalarna, Sweden for North America. Among those emigrants were two of my great-uncles, Karl-Erik and Klas Edward Nygren, as well as their older sister, Alma Elisabeth, whose story this is. A maternal aunt of theirs had left earlier, also from the parish of Stora Tuna, which lost 18% of its population during the great wave of emigration from Sweden.



Alma Nygren Janisch and her husband Franz (Frank) G. Janisch
with their children, Victor and Mildred, circa 1930

Alma, born on October 25, 1875, was the daughter of Lisa Aurora Envall and Erik Jansson Nygren and was the eldest of their twelve children. Six of these children died young, three emigrated to America, never to return, and of the three who remained in Sweden one was my paternal grandfather, Johan Emanuel Nygren. Alma's father was most likely a subsistence farmer. When I was a child, the simple two room cottage that had housed his large family was still standing and spoke of the deep poverty and hopelessness that drove so many Swedes to leave for America.

For Alma, there can only have been two choices, a life much like her mother's dire one or emigration. She chose the latter and at age 21, she began the journey that would take her to America, first to Denver, CO. and some ten years later to Portland, OR.

Alma left Sweden on August 7, 1896 and followed the usual route from there to America: Gothenburg to Hull in England and then on to Liverpool, where she boarded *The Majestic*, a ship holding close to 1,500 passengers. The ship's manifest tells us that she travelled with another young woman from Stora Tuna, Elin (later Ellen) Bagge. Listed as "servants," Alma and Elin arrived in Denver with one piece of luggage each on August 19, 1896....



*To find out what happened next in Alma's story, visit the SRIO website at
Swedishrootsinoregon.org*

and click on the Stories tab. Here you'll find many stories of Swedish immigrants to Oregon.

***Do you have a story to tell about how your Swedish ancestors
arrived in Oregon? We'd love to hear it!***



SRIO board member David Anderson recently acquired this magnificent Dala Häst at an estate sale. She stands 31 inches tall at the tip of her ears and on her chest, she bears the stamp of *Grannas A. Olssons Hemsjölöjd* in Nusnäs. We are all quite envious of David's find.

Presidents Message, continued from Page -1-

In his article, Bhalla goes on to write that stories are vehicles "freeing us from the limits of our own direct experience...we are adapted to physiologically interact with stories. They are a key way in which our ruly culture configures our nature." And that leads me to Swedish Roots in Oregon. *SRIO is all about stories.* Our mission is to gather the stories of Swedish immigrants in Oregon and preserve them for generations to come. These stories keep our Scandinavian heritage alive and enrich our lives as descendants of those brave and determined people who left their homeland to start over in a new country, often with little more than the clothes they wore. In this issue of SRIO's newsletter, you'll find stories that exemplify the Swedish immigrant experience, and there are even more stories waiting for you on our website at swedishrootsinoregon.org.

If you would enjoy "physiologically interacting" with stories of your own Swedish heritage, Swedish Roots in Oregon would love to help guide you.



God Jul till alla!

Tack så mycket, Leif!

Earlier this year long-time board member Leif Rosqvist retired from his position as SRIO newsletter editor. We thank Leif for his many years of service and for his ongoing interest in and support of Swedish Roots in Oregon.



Find us on
Facebook

SRIO is seeking volunteers to assist us with research projects. In particular, we need help uploading names to our genealogy database. We would also like to redesign our website to be mobile friendly, and we would be delighted to have additional hands at our tabling events throughout the year. If you would like to devote your time to any of these efforts, please contact us at

president@swedishrootsinoregon.org