Vol. 27, No. 1
Spring 1970
Whole No. 103

## The Northern Swans

By Sven Åhman (936)
The Northern Swans of 1956, unquestionably the most popular of modern Scandinavian stamp issues among collectors in the outside world, have a long and rather interesting history. They were as least five years in the making.

In a common design for Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, they were all issued on the same date, October 30, 1956, proclaimed as "The Day of the North." For all five countries the colors were the same: red for the lower of the two values, blue for the higher, corresponding to the current domestic and international letter rates, respectively.

While the stamps of the other four countries were printed in sheets and perforated all around, those of Sweden were issued only in coils, horizontally imperforate, vertically perforated 13.

So, when I happened to come upon the higher value of the Sweden issue in red instead of in blue, and perforated 11 all around, I need not explain my


Finnish essay
surprise. It made me decide to find out more about the background of these unusually pretty stamps.

It turned out that the Sweden 40 öre in red instead of blue, and perforated on all four sides, was one of a set of essays. Along with similar essays from all the other countries, it was printed either for final approval of the design in 1954, or to demonstrate both design and approved colors of the definitive stamp in the summer of 1956.

The idea of a common issue for all five countries was first broached by private organizations, called Norden (The North), in 1951 or possibly the year before. Since shortly after the end of World War I, these organizations have been active in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden since 1919, in Iceland since 1922, and in Finland since 1924. Their geeral purpose is to work in various ways to deepen the feeling of affinity between the Northern countries. In separate approaches to their respective postal administrations, the organizations suggested a stamp issue in a common design to celebrate a "Day of the North" planned for September 1951. They proposed that five swans on the wing should be used to symbolize the five countries.

At a conference in Copenhagen in March of 1951, the postal administrations of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden agreed in principle to the suggestion. Iceland, not represented at the conference, was consulted by telephone and likewise expressed her interest. It was found, however, that a number of practical questions must first be resolved. To ensure uniformity, the issues of all countries ought to be produced by the same printing plant. And although the idea of five swans in the design was approved, a competition between invited artists from the different countries was to be arranged to secure the best possible execution.

The artists selected in their own country by each of the postal administrations were:

Denmark: Viggo Bang.
Finland: Signe Hammarsten-Janson.
Norway: Johs. Haukland.
Sweden: Mark Sylwan.
No artist from Iceland appears to have taken part in the competition.
Sketches were submitted to a Scandinavian postal administration conference in Reykjavik in July of 1953, but it was not immediately decided which

## THE POSTHORN <br> Official Publication of the SCANDINAVIAN COLLECTORS CLUB <br> Published bi-monthly 50 c per copy or $\$ 3.00$ per year

Spring 1970, Vol. 27, No. 1, Whole No. 103
Second Class postage paid at Arlington, Virginia and additional mailing offices
Office of Publication: Arlington, Va. 22201
Advertising rates on request
Editor: R. Norby, Box 175, Ben Frarklin Sta., Washington, D. C. 20044 to whom all material and communications concerning The Posthorn should be sent.
one to accept. First, essays of all the designs were to be printed in regular stamp size, both in red and blue, and these essays were then to be circulated among the postal administrations.

At the next conference, in Copenhagen in September of 1954, the essays. were presented. Viggo Bang's Danish entry was recommended for approval, to be produced by the printing plant of the Swedish postal administration in Stockholm for delivery in mid-1956, either in sheets of 50 or in coils of 100 ,' according to the wishes of each administration.

I have had the good fortune to obtain essays not only of the stamps of all five countries in the approved design, but also of those executed according tc the sketches of the other competing artists. In each case, one copy in blue and one in red for each country, both of the same denomination, are affixed to a white card. Each card thus holds ten essays, all perforated 11 all around.


Danish essay
On the back of each of the cards in my possession, a former official of the Swedish postal administration has certified that the four sets of essays had been given to him, by virtue of his office, as his personal property in 1956. I have no way of ascertaining how many such sets were printed. I can only say that I had never even heard of them before I saw them, and have yet to meet anybody else who has seen any.

The chronology given above and some additional information about the issue can be found in Nordisk Posttidskrift for 1956, in a series of articles in Nos. 1-3.

Since the decision in favor of the Viggo Bang design was made in 1954 after essays of all four entries were inspected, it would seem reasonable to assume that the sets I have, shown in the accompanying illustrations, stem from that year. There are, however, indications that they may not have been made until 1956.

Nordisk Posttidskrift says that at a later Northern postal conference, in Gothenburg in June of 1956, when "final proofs of the Swan stamps were presented for the first time," a choice was made between alternative color shades, it being decided to use the blue proposed by Viggo Bang and the red proposed by Olle Hjortzberg, of Sweden. All the essays seem to me to bẹ printed in the red and blue shades of the definitive stamp. And, as I mentioned, the original owner of all four sets of essays declares that he received them in 1956. But why, at such a late stage, essays should have been printed also of the rejected designs, is far from clear to me,

The definitive stamps were shown at the Northern postal conference in Helsinki in September of 1956, and it was decided to issue them in October. The engraving was done by Sven Ewert, veteran engraver of the Swedish postal administration and a personal friend and professional collaborator of Viggo Bang's since shortly after the liberation of Denmark at the end of World War II, when he engraved the stamp designed by Bang for the 75th onniversary of King Christian X.

In all, the Northern Swans stamps were issued in a little over 56 million copies, distributed as follows:



Norwegian essay


Swedish essay

As can be seen from the illustration showing the essays of the approved design, only the essays of Denmark, Iceland and Sweden were printed in a denomination later used for the definitive stamps, in each case the higher of the two values. The Finland and Norway essays, 25 (Markkaa) and 55 ( $\phi \mathrm{re}$ ) respectively, have no counterpart in the actual issue.

As to the swan motif, the latest Handbook of the stamps of Sweden mentions that as a symbol of the free community of the five Northern countries it was inspired by a poem called "Svanerne fra Norden" (Swans of the North) by the Danish poet Hans Hartvig Seedorff Pedersen.

Here is a rank amateur's attempt at an English rendering of the poem:
They settled down one day on Northern shoresthe five wild swans, cloaked in their silvery robes.
A glimpse of dawn threw color on their breasts before the sun itself burst into scarlet fiame. The wisps of mist gave way. A giant space with splendid, towering clouds above the foam of waves descended, blue, into the watery depths that cradled youthful, shining lands up North.

The first young swan burst out in song:
"Here, sisters, I shall live and build my nest. My mood is one with Zealand's clover fields and scent of honey from the Jutland moors. Such beauty has this land where I set down, where swan-like dreams are lifted towards me in pallid cups of water-lilies, which are anchored in the darkness of their lake."

But then, as DENMARK, hailed by song of birds, lay white and quiet in the silent sea, the swan called SVEA spoke and told her sister: "Here I, like you, will dream, and live, and die. My birch shall wave a greeting to your beech, and Scania's cuckoo call to Zealand's larkand if the waves and salty winds us part, the moon-bridge of the Sound shall join us still."
The swan flew off. But in her flight due East a pair of dauntless wings still followed close. "When you have landed"-so said SUOMI's voice"I shall go on to one of thousand lakes. And if the icy, rigid winter spreads its whitish breath above the mirror of the seathe whir of winds in crowns of pine-trees will meet song of swans to Kalevala's tunes."
Left were the last two of the comely birds. It was as if they harked to sea-born song.
The distant roar of North and of Atlantic sea beat on a coast where sea-weeds only bloomed. They saw, in foam from wild and lashing gales two nesting-places on a stone-grey rock
Then NORWAY soared into the wind and waves and set course North, with ICELAND in her wake.

A thousand years went by . . . They met again, the five wild swans upon the Northern coasts, whipped by a wind whose hands have smoothed both coarsest rock and soft breast of the birds. They still were dauntless, daring, proud, although their wings were stained by caking blood. For fought they had, risen in rightful wrathand bled they had, in struggle for their nests.

But washed all over were their reddened breasts, and strong came through the Northern day the mighty roar of wings of swans, five pair, which beat together like notes on a harp. Five lives and fates sang in this mighty tune of victory, defeat, of sorrow and of joy. And 'twas as though each joy and pain alike were felt and cradled by a single heart.

The very first nest site was never lost.
As storm rips through the crowns of birch and pine and cloaks of mist obscure the bell buoy's ring, they meet again, the five white swans.
And when the sun brings out its glimpse of gold from over chilly cloud and steel-blue sea, there sail, like signs of light above the earth, five free, unfettered birds-Swans of the North.

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## Scandinavian Philatelic Literature Service

## Report for 1969

The SPLS continued its dual service-of providing the best of the Scanainavian philatelic catalogs and other literature to all collectors on this continent, as well as securing a sound profit for SCC.

The 12 -month period saw the handling of 318 orders for a total sales amount of $\$ 2,474.50$ delivered under 326 separate invoices-all goods shippe! en day of receipt of order. The cost of goods ( $\$ 1,743.48$ ), advertising ( $\$ 63.55$ ), and other expenses ( $\$ 465.87$ ) left a net profit of $\$ 201.60$.

At year's end, the SPLS shows the following (condensed) financial statament:

| Assets | Liabilities |
| :---: | :---: |
| Cash and in bank .---.-.- \$101.62 | Goods on sonsignment .-- \$698.00 |
| Stock (at cost) _--------2,203.11 | Accounts Payable _------ 1,055.61 |
| Consigned goods .---------698.00 | Canadian currency ------- . 50 |
| Accounts Receivable _-----. 238.15 | Funding by SCC ....-.-- 1,300.00 |
| Equipment and supplies _- 168.70 | Net Surplus _--------------355.47 |
| \$3,409.58 | \$3,409.58 |

The SPLS looks forward to 1970 with confidence in its mission to serve all Scandinavian-interested collectors.
R. Norby, SPLS Mgr.

## Scandinavian Stamp Mart

## Report for 1969



## Balance Sheet, 31 December 1969

## Assets

Cash \$ 199.07

Cash in Bank (Checking Account) 2,081.40
Cash in Bank (Savings Account) $\quad 3,700.00$
Equipment (at cost) 80.00
Goodwill 19.90
Accounts Receivable 84.41
Advances to Members 427.56
Blank Mart Sales Books (at cost) 30.10
Total Assets $\$ 6,622.44$

## Liabilities and Net Worth

Account Payable, S. C. C. (Advance) $\$ 50.00$
Accounts Payable (Due owners from Sales) $\quad 5,352.50$
Commissions Due Mart Manager 507.37
Sales of Blank Mart Sales Books 14.50
Overpayments (to be refunded) .10
Surplus (Total Profits) 697.97
Total Liabilities and Surplus $\$ 6,622.44$

This report covers the first full year of the Mart's eperation under the ownership and management of S. C. C. The figures above reflect a demand for Scandinavian stamps and related material which is fairly priced. The one factor of our operation, however, that needs to be corrected is that MORE books of material are needed in order to serve ALL the members that desire to use the Mart. Serving our individual members during the past year has been spasmodic as all the material "on hand" has generally been on consignment to chapters in order that MORE members could be served. We are studying ways and means to improve our service and further information will be published in future issues of The POSTHORN.

More material is needed by the Mart in order to provide the opportunity for ALL members to see the material and to make purchases. Classics for all Scandinavian countries are needed and welcomed. 19th and early 20th Century covers are desired, but there is not much demand for modern first-day-covers. Material is needed from ALL Scandinavian countries which include the Danish West Indies, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Karelia, North Ingermanland, Norway, Schleswig and Sweden. We, of course, need stamps, covers, Christmas Seals and Locals. The Pakke Porto ("Bears") of Greenland are in great demand. Swedish coil pairs and booklet pairs have been requested. Christmas Seals of all Scandinavia are one of the more popular items. Guidelines on pricing material are contained in the Mart Regulations which are contained in the new Membership Directory. Modern stamps, if in fine condition and fairly' but moderately priced, will sell. Damaged material (i.e., thin spots, perfs missing, small tears, creases, etc.) generally will not sell for more than $10 \%$ of catalog, and any imperfections should be noted. Similar discounts from catalog should be applied for heavily canceled and/or off-center stamps. Please do not include more than 2, or at most 3, copies of a modern stamp per book (blocks of 4 are, of course, an exception, but no more than 2 blocks of the same stamp). The more variety per book the greater are the opportunities for sales from that book. Common (packet type) material will not sell well (unless it has a nice, clear, clean or unusual cancel). Blank Mart Sales Books may be obtained from your Mart Manager and are 15c each, or 7 for $\$ 1.00$, all postpaid.

I have been asked from time to time for a "status report" on books. I simply do not have the time to prepare periodic reports on each book in the Mart, but will be glad to provide such information to owners upon request.

Your support during the past two years is greatly appreciated. I call upon each and every member for her or his support and understanding in the future.

Wade H. Beery, MART Manager<br>115 Amelia Drive, Manassas, Virginia 22110

# $\dagger$ <br> PREBEN K. JOHNSTON <br> SCC 563 

Past President SCC Chapter 2, Philadelphia
With deepest sympathy to his family and friends from all of SCC

## The Choices of the Judges

SCCers were off to a good start in "collecting" 1970 awards-at SOJEX, MEMPHEX, and BEPEX. At SOJEX, in addition, the Second SCC Convention took place, with a very successful meeting which will be reported in the next issue, space in this issue permitting only the recording of the many and various awards:

SOJEX 1970 (Atlantic City, N. J.)
A Gold Award-as well as SCC's Trophy for the best Scandinavian ex-hibit-went to SCC President Svend Yort, for his "Denmark" (mint 1851-1930).

A Gold Award-and the Dr. Wm. Stericker Memorial Trophy-were won by SCC V-P Victor E. Engstrom, for his "Norway" (postal markings 1855-74).

Hans Windfeld-Hansen captured a Bronze Award for his "Provisional Issues of Denmark and Iceland," as did William J. Banks with his "Norway, Øre Issues 1877-88."

The newly established SCC Chapter Award was presented to Chapter 12 Washington, D. C. for a 1 -frame exhibit of "Scandinavian Bi-colors."

MEMPHEX 1970 (Memphis, Tenn.)
A Silver Medal-and the Midland Trophy for the best Scandinavian ex-hibit-were awarded posthumously to Preben K. Johnston for his "SchleswigHolstein" display. In addition, he also garnered a Bronze Medal for an exhibit of Denmark.

A Silver Medal was also won by Victor E. Engstrom for his display of Danish West Indies postal history.

BEPEX 1970 (Paramus, N. J.)
Vietor E. Engstrom (again!) upheld the Scandinavian honor by winning a Gold Plaque in the General Foreign Section.

## Your 1970 SCC membership dues

## of $\$ 3.00$ should be sent to SCC Treasurer

Robert W. Lang, 23 The Horseshoe, Newark, Delaware 19711
(Please make check or M. O. payable to Scandinavian Collectors Club)

# Smithsonian Boosts Scandinavian Philately 

Huge Six-Nation Extravaganza in Nation's Capital SCC (Club and members) Participate

"STAMPS AND POSTS OF SCANDINAVIA"-a special exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C., is open to the public-every day, Sundays and holidays included-and will remain open until Aug. 2, 1970.

The exhibition is located in the Hall of Philately on the third floor of the National Museum of History and Technology (on Constitution Avenue-between 12th and 14th Streets). If you are anywhere near during the next several weeks, you will find it worth your while to spend some time in viewing this unusual display of Scandinavian philatelic material, brought together by enthusiastic cooperation between every one of the Nordic lands and the Smithsonian's Division of Postal History.

The opening to the public took place on the 17 th of April, and was preceeded by a formal preview for invited guests in the evening of April 16 (to which all SCCers were invited). This affair was geared for some $500+$ or people, but no less than 1,268 persons attended (a record in the Museum's history of such opening ceremonies).

Each country has selected stamps that give a clear and interesting description of her history, culture, nature, famous people, and contributions to industry and science. In addition, the Danish panels display unusual archival color proofs and artists' drawings. The Norwegian panels show official reprints (in blocks of 8) of Norway's earliest stamps, and the panels from Sweden give a good visual explanation of Swedish stamp booklets.

The display of portions of Smithsonian's Scandinavian postal stationery includes Finland's first (1845) stamped envelopes, which are also among the world's first; an unusual presentation of progressive proofs of Iceland's first (1879) postal card; as well as proof impression of Norway's, and the world's, first (1903) meter cancellation machine.

The privately owned displays deserve special mention-as well as a close study by visitors and philatelic students. There you will find a panel of early Danish folded letters and envelopes, by SCC President Svend Yort-a Danish West Indies panel, by SCC Vice-President Victor E. Engstrom-a Finnish panel by past SCC President Lauson H. Stone, with rare stamps and mail pieces of the Finnish associated areas of Aunus, North Ingermanland, and Karelia-a Greenland panel, by SCC Chapter 12's Theodore G. Gilinsky, with a comprehensive selection of the well-known "polar bears," including their use as postal savings receipts-an Icelandic panel, by past SCC President, and now Board Member, Roger A. Swanson, offers the student of Iceland a rare upportunity to study the PRIR issue in depth-a Norwegian panel, a club project by the Scandinavian Collectors Club, displays a completely reconstructed 200 -subject sheet of Norway No. 1 -and a Swedish panel, by past editor of S. C. C.'s The POSTHORN Ralph E. Danielson, rounds out the philatelic extravaganza by exhibiting never-before-shown postage due markings of mid19th century Sweden.

The three-dimensional objects from many different divisions of the Smithsonian museums lend an intriguing touch to the exhibition, and they have caught the public's fancy-perhaps especially the Gokstad viking ship model; a whaling rocket harpoon; and the Swedenborg aeroplane model of 1714; as well as Ted Roosevelt's skis.

A multitude of Scandinavian stamp literature is handed out, including books, magazines, and booklets from and about each of the countries. The outstanding publication is the attractive all-Scandinavian booklet prepared
especially for this exhibition by the Danish Postal Administration, and which gives an account of the stamp issuing policies of the five countries. If you can't get to Washington to pick it up-don't waste any time-simply write: Division of Postal History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. 20560. As long as the supply lasts, you'll get it.

## Members' Bulletin Board

Have something to sell your fellow-members? Something you would like to buy? Information you'd like to secure? Or anything else you'd like to tell the membership?

Then our MEMBERS' BULLETIN BOARD is the place! THE POSTHORN will accept ads of limited size, and for SCC members only, for $\$ 1$ per ad per insertion. These "boxes" have a text area of about $2 \times 7 / 8$ " and are limited to 6 lines (fewer lines with heavier type).

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## Scandinavian Stamp Mart

Want to buy the duplicates of other collectors? Want to sell your duplicates? Want to put your duplicates to good use-those you have been having around for years and never figured out what to do with?

Then the SCANDINAVIAN STAMP MART is for you!
The Mart Manager is Wade M. Beery, 115 Amelia Dr., Manassas, Va. 22110.

You will find it worth your while getting in touch with him.

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## Chapter 1-Seattle Washington

Meets every first Wednesday, Collectors Club, 7212 E. Green Lake Dr., N. Seattle Wash.
Secretary: Miss Harriet Hintze, 1312 University Street, Seattle, Wash. 98101

## Chapter 2-_Philadelphia

Meets every third Monday, Kendrick Rec. Center, Ridge Avenue and Pensdale St.. Philadelphia, Pa.
Secretary: Mrs Christine Blinn, P. O. Box 730, Woodbury, N. J. 08096

## Chapter 3—Detroit, Michigan

Meets every thirg or fourth Saturday, at homes of members on a rotation basis.
Secretary: Oscar E. Mittelstaedt, Jr., 4145 So. Fulton Pl., Royal Oak, Mich. 4877?

## Chapter 4-Chicago, Illinois

Meets every fourth Thursday, Room 216 at LaSalle Hotel, Chicago, Illinols.
Secretary: Alanson C. Schwarz, 744 S. Washington St., Hinsdale, Illinois 60521

## Chapter 5-Boston

Meets every second Wednesday at Cardinal Spellman Phil. Museum, Weston, Mass. Presldent: Arthur Anderson, P. O. Box 941, Framingham, Mass. 01701

## Chapter 7—New York

Meets every 2nd Wednesday, Danish Athletic Club, 750-65th St., Brooklyn, N. Y. Secretary: Melvin I. Goldfarb, 200 Pinehurst Ave., New York, N. Y. 10033

## Chapter 8—South Jersey

Meets every third Tuesday, 405 North 8th Street, Vineland, N. J.
Secretary: Mrs. Helen Rocco, 405 North 8th Street, Vineland, N. J. 08360

## Chapter 9—North Jersey

Meets every third Thursday, Commonwealth Club, 551 Valley Rd., Upper Montclair, N. J.

Secretary: George G. Birdsalf, 82 Hawthorne Ave., Bloomfield, N. J. 07003

## Chapter 10-Toronto, Canada

Mects every second Wednesday, 1224 Broadview Avenue, Toronto, Canada
Secretary: William A. Daubert, P. O. Box 43, Station H, Toronto 13, Ont., Canada

## Chapter 11—Iceland

Meets every first Monday, Cafeteria Main Post Office Building, Reykjavik.
Secretary: Bjorn Gunnarsson, Fjolnisveg 13, Reykjavik.

## Chapter 12-Washington, D. C.

Meets every fourth Tuesday, Museum of History \& Technology, Smithsonian Institation, Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.
Secretary: Wade H. Beery, 115 Amelia Drive, Manassas, Virginia 22110

## Chapter 13—Delaware

Meets every last Tuesday, at homes of members on a rotation basis.
Secretary: John R. Day, 8 Stones Throw Rd., Wilmington, Del. 29803

## Chapter 14-Twin City

Meets every second Wednesday, Northeast State Bank, Marshall St., N. E., Minneapolis, Minn.
Secretary: Robert Frigstad, 2181 Lakeaires Bivd., White Bear Lake, Minn. 55110.

Chapter 15-Rochester, New York<br>Meets every fourth Tuesday at 249 Courtly Circle, Rochester, N. Y.<br>Secretary: Mrs. B. Wennermark, 249 Courtly Circle, Rochester, N. Y. 14615

## Chapter 16-South Mississippi <br> Meets every first Saturday at homes of members, thus: <br> Bay St. Louis: March, June, Sept., Dec. Gulf Port: Jan., April, July, Oct. Biloxi: Feb., May, Aug., Nov.

## Chapter 17-Southern California

Meets every first Wednesday at Los Angeles Philatelic Club, 417 S. Alvarado St., Los Angeles, Calif.
Secretary: William Offner, 1122 South Tremaine Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90019

## Chapter 18-Memphis, Tenn.

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