

## Eastern Division Convention Report



*The visiting Swedish choruses all entertained during banquet night - here are the Piteå singers*

I have nothing but "hurrahs" for the E.D. Convention 2002. every event was so well planned, and through the Convention's entirety, each went off perfectly.

Registration Day, which can be quite hectic, went very smoothly (until about 4:00 when our two Swedish choruses arrived - and then the committee had their work cut out for them!) These two groups stayed at the hotel for dinner so that they would not have to rush our Opening Night program.

Opening Night was superb! Mr. George Langberg (a.k.a. "Swedish Gold") began the evening with a group of rousing Swedish songs accompanied on his guitar. Clapping of hands and stomping of feet were everywhere.

Ellen and Ken Svengalis entertained the crowd with a couple of Swedish songs, as did Arnold Gustavson and Bob Forstrom, who sang an Italian duet that brought the house down. Rich Johnson, of the Verdandi Chorus of Rhode Island, did the gig we enjoyed at Stratton Mountain in 1996. His down-east humor had the people rolling in the aisles. Then came Don Lamont, the President of the Heritage Foundation, who did his now-famous rendition of "If I Were A Rich Man" - some of his gyrations reminded us of good old Elvis! The last but not least entertainers were the two choruses from Sweden, Rosvikskören and Pitebygens Manskör, sing-

ing some songs which totally delighted all of us. Coffee and pastry were a welcome finish to the evening.

Individual Chorus Night was held on Thursday, with Ellen Svengalis in charge. With Ellen at the helm you know it went perfectly! Again the two choruses from Sweden entertained us. We were so privileged to have them and their fine Directors. The evening ended with coffee and bullar.

Our Grand Banquet, under the chairmanship of Hanneleh Rinta-Turri, was held on Friday evening in the main ballroom of the



*The Swedish chorus leaders in a tribute to the AUSS and Jody Jones, president*

Trumbull Marriott Hotel. It began with a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres and dinner at 7:15. Carl-Erik Westberg, past President of the AUSS, was the Master of Ceremonies, and Jody Jones, our current National President, was our Guest of Honor. Awards were handed out to Carl Elliason, Marianne O'Leary, and Marion Bird. Our two Swedish choruses presented gifts to Jody and Convention Chairman, Richard Norell. Again, our two visiting choruses sang for us, and we were also entertained by a small group from of the choruses who performed a nightclub act. After the festivities, there was dancing to the music of Bert Stromholm and his orchestra. The banquet concluded about midnight.

On Saturday, the Women's Luncheon took place at the Marriott's garden Pavilion, with entertainment by Sharon Alberston. Linda Gustavson and Louise Norell were co-chairpersons of this event. The men were bussed to the Scandinavian Club of Fairfield for their luncheon, and were entertained by the Coastal Chordsmen, a group of 32 singers in the Barbershop Quartet tradition - what a program!

After returning to the hotel, all prepared for the Grand Concert, which was held on Saturday evening at the Regina Quick Center for the Arts at Fairfield University. Arnold Gustavson was the chairman of the event, and as usual it went perfectly. Johannes Brahms' "Alto Rhapsody" featured the men of the combined choruses with contralto solo by Louise Norell, wife of our Division President, who received a standing ovation and flowers from the audience. All in all a perfect evening - and all in all, a perfect convention! I must add that anyone who plans a Convention should include a chorus or two from Sweden - they were a delight!

Richard Norell  
President, AUSS, Eastern Division  
Convention Chairman