



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

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Our Own Log Cabin

By Sigurd Lee

It's no secret that the Museum Board would like to acquire, some day, a pioneer log cabin to place on the hillside lawn adjoining the Museum on Brown's Court in Mankato. That may come to pass. Meanwhile, in its second year of operation, Museum Director George Orvick and the Board, in lieu of the real thing, decided to create a log cabin; and this they have done, on the basement level of the Museum building.

Expertise was needed to lay the floor and build the walls (the ceiling was simply painted black) and to treat them to look authentically

old. Steps were built to a non-existent loft and some shelving added. Then it was to furnish the "cabin".

Though most of the materials came from the Ottesen collection itself, others added particular pieces: a wonderful butter churn; a kerosene lamp; a spinning wheel; a cradle; and a variety of, mostly small, farm tools. The Ottesen drop-leaf table, well preserved, is the centerpiece and separate pictures of Ulrik Vilhelm Koren (our Norwegian "Walther") and his wife, Elisabeth (her *Diary* is well known) adorn the walls. A corner cupboard built into



the wall is colorfully painted in Telemark rosemaling design. The cradle is unique, one of three apparently, the other two in the possession of the John Adams and Alice Roosevelt Longworth families. Indirect lighting gives the effect of shadow and light.



Though such a small place looks primitive to us, to them it must have been a wonderful refuge. Think of what they had recently experienced. Imagine weeks on the high seas in sailing vessel accommodations! Then upon arrival in this new land of America they had to travel half the continent to reach the Midwest. Lacking a Motel 6, they likely then shared a cabin with a relative or they may have found a rude, abandoned building and turned it into a temporary home; or they may have chosen to

live in a sod house for several months of even years.



When they could finally acquire land that had woods on it, then they could begin building their own cabin. That was quite a job because there was lots of other work to do; sometimes they had help from others. One family finished their cabin in the nick of time. In fact, the first night they spent in their new home they awoke to find mounds of snow on blankets and floor, coming through the walls where they hadn't finished.

On the level where the log cabin is built in our Museum, there is a door that goes directly out to the hillside; perhaps, one day a real log cabin, or another pioneer building, will one day be places there.

When in Mankato at the Synod Convention or on a trip of your own, visit the Museum and don't miss the downstairs "log cabin". After you've examined its contents, take a moment to stand still and think about our brave forbears coming to this new country and living in such a dwelling, and imagine! 🌿

Sigurd Lee is professor emeritus of Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN, and a member of the Historical Society board.

Pastor Emil Hansen (“The Thirteen”)

Continuing a series of biographies on the founders of the ELS
By Rebecca DeGarmeaux

“Those who knew Emil Hansen as a pastor will bear witness that he also was an able preacher of the grace of God. Constantly holding forth the glad tidings of the free favor of God to sinful men in Christ Jesus.”



“Many brethren in the ministry will remember how in pastoral conferences and in private conversation he so frequently reminded his brethren: ‘By all means, preach the Gospel. We need it. The people need it.’”

With these words, Pastor T. N. Teigen, in his funeral sermon for Pastor Emil Hansen, gives us a glimpse into the ministry of this man. He was a faithful servant of the Word who cared for the souls of those to whom he ministered. He also saw his own need for the saving power of the Gospel.

Emil Hansen was born April 26, 1880, in Norman County near Twin Valley, Minnesota to Osten and Matthea (née Lerud) Hansen. He attended Park Region College from 1896-97, Luther College in Decorah, Iowa from 1897-1903, and Luther Seminary from 1903-06. He was ordained on June 24, 1906 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Warren, Minnesota.

In its letter to the call committee, the congregation at Warren specified some of the qualifications which the members considered necessary for their candidate. They wanted someone who could work in both Norwegian and English. English was seen as especially important for the instruction of the young people. They also wanted someone who might be able to explore the mission possibilities in the area. He served at Warren until 1908.

In 1908 he married Annette O. Anderson. They later adopted one son, Clarence.

From Warren he served at Scarville, Iowa from 1908-1925. It was at this time that the merger of the Norwegian church bodies was undertaken. Pastor Hansen could not, in good conscience, go along with the merger and tried to talk his congregation out of joining it. When the majority of the congregation went with the merger, he was able to form a new congregation with a sizable minority that left with him.

While at Scarville, he served as temporary pastor at Albert Lea, Minnesota, from 1918-1921. From 1921-1925 he served as temporary pastor at Forest City, Iowa.

He served at First American Lutheran Church in Mayville, North Dakota, from 1925-1932, where he was the first pastor of the minority group that left Mayville Lutheran Church which had joined the merger. While at Mayville he also served at Morgan, North Dakota, and in 1931 Pastor George Gullixson was called to be his assistant and help with a preaching station in Blanchard, North Dakota. He returned to serve Albert Lea full time from 1932-1947. Finally, Pastor Hansen served in Volga, South Dakota, from 1947 until 1949 when he retired to Sioux Falls because of poor health.

Pastor Hansen had friends on both sides of the 1917 split and was, at least once, called upon to mediate between those who found

themselves on opposing sides of the merger issue. He also spent time trying to persuade friends, through Scripture and the Confessions, not to go into the merger.

The spiritual education of the young people of his congregations was of great importance to him. During his first period of service at Our Savior's in Albert Lea, the congregation, with his leadership and support, started its Christian Day School with an enrollment of 10 students on September 13, 1920. Although he did not start a school in Scarville, it is evident that he planted the seed. The Scarville congregation opened its first Christian Day school only two years after he left there. While in Mayville, attempts were made to begin a Christian Day school with a Mr. Pederson as teacher, but apparently these plans fell through.

Emil Hansen died March 6, 1956 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, at the age of 75 leaving behind his wife and son.

When we look back at the thirteen Pastors who met at Lime Creek in 1918 and bravely held forth against the tide of doctrinal unionism in their day, we see a variety of personalities and talents. Some were strong leaders whose names are familiar to us because they were the early Synodical officers. Others, like Emil Hansen, we do not know as well. Pastor Hansen was a strong defender of the Lutheran faith who used his gifts especially in missions and in supporting the spiritual education of the young.

Emil Hansen was a faithful Christian pastor concerned for souls: of friends and parishioners, young and old, his fellow pastors and himself. 

Rebecca DeGarmeaux is co-editor of Oak Leaves. She was pastor's wife at East and West Paint Creek and then the Jerico-Saude parish in northeast Iowa, for a total of 10 years. She lives in Mankato, MN.



*Annette Hansen, wife of Pastor Emil Hansen –
See the article on the following pages.*

Annette Hansen — 90 years

Reprinted from the *Lutheran Sentinel* Vol. 63 – No. 3 – February 14, 1980

A grand old lady celebrated her 90th birthday back in September [1979]. Mrs. Annette Hansen of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was honored by her congregation, Bethel Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. Mrs. Hansen is the widow of the late Rev. Emil Hansen, who was active in the early days of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

In 1975, Hansen wrote an account of her life in a Lutheran parsonage in the first half of the century. She first read it to a mother-daughter banquet at Bethel. We reprint it here in her honor. It gives a candid, homey picture of personal life in parsonage surroundings.

I suppose I could say I was born in a little house on the prairie in Northern Minnesota near Warren in Marshall County, in 1889 on October 5th.

My parents, John J. and Albertine Anderson, had come from Wisconsin some time before that. They moved from the place where my grandparents had settled when they came from Norway. My mother was born in 1865, and she was a baby when they immigrated. My mother grew up and was married to my father, who had come from Norway as a young man. They lived in Wisconsin for some time, and my older brother and sister were born there. They had their house burn down; so they decided to go to Northern Minnesota where they could get land cheap by taking a homestead. That is where I was born.

My father was a carpenter and worked at that until he could get the land worked up to start farming. He had to walk to get to work and to town to get groceries, the latter a trip of at least 5 miles to Warren. Warren was the county seat of Marshall County and had maybe a thousand people at that time. I can remember when they hauled stones to build the court house, which is still standing and being used.

Those were hard days for my mother, as she was afraid of prairie fires, and also of In-

dians. There weren't many who had electric lights, and in the country we didn't have any.

I think almost everyone had a rain water barrel, as the well water was hard and alkaline, but it was good and healthy to drink and to cook with. My father dug the wells by hand, and they were curbed. We pulled water up in a bucket until later years when we had a pump. We washed clothes by rubbing on a wash board which wasn't too hard after all. We used a boiler to heat the water and also to boil the white clothes. And they really got white. Most of the time we had homemade soap, but we would buy some big brown bars for washing clothes if we ran short. For hand soap we could buy some real nice toilet soap. In the winter time we thawed snow or melted ice for soft water to wash with.

For cooling things in the summertime, we hung milk, butter, meat and other things down in the well. We had dirt cellars under the house, one for potatoes and other vegetables, and one for foods like milk, cream, canned fruits and jelly.

As the family grew larger, my father added more rooms. The first one-room house was the main part of the house as it was quite large. That is where I was born and later on married, as I was married at home since my father had been sick for a long time was just able to sit up. The people at Warren had expected us to be married there, as they had a new church. But I belonged in the country, and we didn't have a church yet, using one of the school houses or a home for services. We did have a minister from Norway for awhile, and he preached at Warren and also in the country on occasion.

My older brother and sister were confirmed in Warren in Norwegian. My mother taught us to read Norwegian and also started us in the Catechism, Explanation, and Bible History, as we had no Sunday School. When it came my turn to be confirmed, I went to Wis-

consin and stayed with my grandparents and was confirmed there. I had finished eighth grade by that time, and when I came back I went to school one more year. After that I had to stay home and help my mother with the work, since my older sister got married and moved away.

Work was harder on the farm than now, with all kinds of machinery. Then almost everything was done by hand in haying and harvesting. I can well remember the first binder and some other machinery. So before I left the farm we had easier ways of doing things. Also my younger brothers were growing up, so the work was easier for all of us.

About this time the people in Warren and in the country where we lived wanted a pastor from the Norwegian Synod. So they wrote to the Mission Board, and they sent a young man up there who had just graduated from the Seminary at Hamline, near Minneapolis. He was Emil Hansen of Twin Valley, Minnesota, a graduate of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and of Hamline. He was stationed at Warren as they were better organized than out in the country.

I remember the first time he came out to see my folks, and he came often, as my father was sick for quite some time. My brothers used to tease me, and say, "I think he likes you." It made me sort of embarrassed when he did come, and it seemed he came quite often. When he had been out looking up people and preaching farther away, he often stopped in for dinner on Monday on his way back to town. He visited my father, and we had a good chance to get acquainted.

He soon organized a congregation and had regular services. The women also organized a ladies' aid, and my mother was the first president. She invited the ladies aid from Warren to our home. We enjoyed that as it was quite a feast. We served a real meal of rullepølse, sauce, jelly, buns, cake and cookies. The women from Warren enjoyed coming out in the country. They all had a horse and buggy, and the finest buggy was that of Mrs. Judge

Grindeland, a real surrey with a fringe on top, large enough to take three or four women along.

The ladies' aids worked hard in the summertime, when they would have ice cream socials, with home-made ice cream, real cream and eggs, and other goodies. Sometimes we had services in a nearby woods, with a picnic afterwards. I guess the ladies' aids have helped to start a lot of churches with the collections from such affairs.

The second year Emil Hansen was at Warren we became engaged. We didn't plan to get married for a while, as they were told at the Seminary riot to marry a girl from the congregation they were serving. So I planned to go to the Ladies' Seminary at Red Wing, Minnesota, to study music. But when Emil got back to Warren he had received a letter of call from Forest City, Iowa. He accepted that; so we were married in September, and moved to Iowa in November 1908, when he was installed as pastor. It seemed like the Lord took a hand in matters so we could get married. The Rev. I. T. Aastad of Thief River Falls, performed the ceremony. The Rev. F. J. Seltz of Thief River Falls was best man, and Laura Hanson, a neighbor girl, was my bridesmaid.

We left the same evening by train on a trip to visit his brothers and other friends. We had a steamboat ride on the Red Lake River. We returned to Warren, where Emil had his farewell sermons in the different places where he had started work. Then we visited my grandparents in Wisconsin and his relatives at Twin Valley, of which there were quite a few. We also stopped in Minneapolis for a few days before going to Forest City.

There were three congregations in the call, the largest being Forest City. One was in Leland, a small town six miles away, and Mt. Valley was quite a few miles out in the country. Since we drove with horse and buggy, we would go there on Saturday evening, when we had morning services in their home until we got a church built on their farm. They also had a grocery store in their home: so it was sort of

a meeting place for people in the neighborhood. It was a lovely place to come to.

The parsonage at Forest City was quite large, but not modern, as we had kerosene lamps, no bathroom. I used a coal burning cookstove, and there was also a hard-coal heater. It was hard to heat the house in the wintertime; so we would close off rooms that we didn't need to use. When we had guests and needed extra heat for a bedroom, we used a kerosene heater that we could carry around. For the study, which was upstairs, we had a wood stove. There was quite a lot of work getting in the fuel and I also carrying out the ashes.

Being we didn't have electricity, I had the old style sad irons, which had to be heated on the cookstove. For washing I used the regular tubs and washboard. We had an icebox for keeping food, as the ice man made his regular rounds.

Most of the people had a cow; so we got our milk in a bucket from someone who had some to spare. I think we paid only about 5 cents a quart. It wasn't homogenized so the coffee cream came to the top. We got our butter at the grocery store in a jar, which the farmers brought in to trade for groceries. We got our meat at the meat market, where they did their own butchering. We could get quite a variety of meats, but we raised our own chickens and butchered them ourselves.

We, of course, had a telephone, the old style crank type, where we had several different rings on the same line and had to get used to detecting your own ring.

Since we had quite a lot of company, our guest rooms were furnished with the porcelain wash dish, water pitcher, and jar to pour the wash water into. Then they were very useful, not an antique item as they are now. And our coffee grinder was another everyday item, used to grind our own coffee.

Things were run a little different in the congregation too, from present days. My husband got his salary only once a year, and that was \$800 and three offerings on the church

festival days. These offerings would vary in amount according to the weather and other economic factors. I suppose it was a custom from Norway, with the congregation marching around the altar to give their offering there. The organist's pay was usually given that way, too, on a separate table.

Any money that was sent to the Missions and to other benevolences was given to the pastor to send in: so the treasurer didn't have to. The deacons or trustees would go around to the homes of the congregation and collect the salary once a year: after awhile it was collected twice a year.

Later on my husband got his salary once a month, and they had envelopes for every Sunday. To begin with no one liked that, but now it is taken for granted.

Shortly after we were settled in Forest City I got myself an organ and took lessons, and was soon playing in church. I continued playing for services for over forty years, until my husband had to quit the ministry because of his health. I also directed church choirs.

Forest City had a lot of interesting things going on, such as lecture courses, cooking school once a year from Ames, Iowa, institutes and extension courses, also a week of Chautauqua every summer. This was a highlight, as they had good programs in a large tent. I remember one time an opera company put on "La Traviata" with some wonderful singers. Another time William Jennings Bryan spoke, and it was fun to hear him. Usually we had company for these events, and we all attended.

During the five years in Forest City my husband had several calls, some twice, but he finally accepted the one to Scarville and North Prairie in Iowa. They had a lovely new parsonage, very large, not modern, as the town was small and didn't have water, sewer or electric lights. We had a coal furnace so we didn't have as many stoves as before. We had a bathroom, but we had to pump the water from the cistern by hand. If it didn't rain for a length of time, the cistern would go dry. For

cooking and drinking water there was a well near the kitchen door with a pump, and that worked fine.

The pastoral work in Scarville was in Norwegian. We had good choirs and interesting work with the young people, as they were interested in music and singing. To have evening programs in our churches we had gas lights. We had three months of Norwegian school in Scarville, less in North Prairie. The young people also attended the Academy at Albert Lea, especially in the wintertime.

The first World War was coming on at this time; so we were busy selling bonds, and the women were sewing and knitting. We learned to can vegetables and to substitute different things in place of white flour and sugar.

We got our first car about this time, but had to keep our horses as the roads were rather bad and we couldn't always use the car. In the winter it was impossible to use the car.

The Synod met at Lime Creek Church in Iowa in 1918, but had to meet in a tent across the Minnesota border, as the governor in Iowa didn't allow any language to be spoken in Iowa except English. The Synod still used the Norwegian as its official language. Maybe the move was alright, since it hurried the change to English, which was better for the children and young people, who didn't understand the Norwegian too well anyway.

Before the war my parents had moved to Pennsylvania and bought a farm there. I didn't get to see them for quite some time. In 1924, when the war was over, I took a trip out there by train and stayed quite awhile. They lived near Oxford, not far from Baltimore, Maryland. So I went to Washington, D. C., and we drove to Valley Forge for a picnic one Sunday and saw Gettysburg and Philadelphia.

While I was in Pennsylvania my husband had gone to British Columbia to take a new Ford to Missionary Moeller, who was stationed there. It was October before we both got back to Scarville. Soon after we had a chance to adopt a baby boy, our son Clarence.

After Christmas we moved to Mayville, South Dakota, where my husband was called to begin church work. Besides Mayville, he went to Fisher, and also preached in East Grand Forks, and Watford City, Sheyenne and Buston, N.D. Later he found an empty church between Hatton and Buxton and started work there, soon having a large congregation named Morgan in that vicinity. He also preached regularly in Blanchard.

Since the congregation in Mayville had to get a church, and was fortunate finding an empty one in a good location, we bought our own home in Mayville. A ladies' aid was organized. It wasn't too long before the church was paid for (a gift of \$1.000 from the ladies' aid helped) and we also got a bell, a new furnace and everything else we needed.

In 1929 we invited the Synod to meet there, which was quite a boost for both the church and the community.

Soon the work was too much for one man; so the Synod called the Rev. George Gullixson to assist with the work in Mayville and Blanchard.

The State Teachers College in Mayville was close to our church, and once a month the young people put on a program to which the college students enjoyed coming. They also liked to come to the ladies' aid meetings as we had good home cooked meals and didn't charge very much. So they enjoyed us and we enjoyed them.

Some members of our choir took part every year in the MESSIAH by Handel, which was sung there every Christmas season. My husband and I were given tickets to that, and went to many good things that were put on at the college. So even if the times were sort of hard in the 30's we got along fairly well. In 1932 my husband had a call to Albert Lea. We moved there in November.

World War II started. We lived in Albert Lea then and some young men left and some didn't come back alive. Our son left, too, when he was 18 years old and came home

when he was 21. Of that time he spent 14 months overseas, but came back real well.

In 1933 we celebrated our silver wedding, and the congregation served a dinner after church on September 16, with a lot of speeches and music. Several pastors were present and gave speeches. I remember one elderly Norwegian telling a story about courtship in Norway in olden days. He said, "A young man took his girl friend for a ride in a buggy, but didn't say anything for a long time. Then he said, 'Isn't it awful how the price of syrup has gone up?' Then they drove on for some time again and he took her home. Then he asked her when he could take her out again. She said, 'Maybe we should wait until the price of syrup comes down.'"

In 1947 we left Albert Lea to go to Oslo Church, near Volga, South Dakota. My husband was not very well and the work at Albert Lea was getting too strenuous. He was installed at Volga April 20, 1947. His health kept getting worse so we went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. They told him he had Parkinson's Disease and couldn't get well. Soon after he resigned his call, having his farewell sermon on Easter Sunday, 1949. We enjoyed our stay there very much and church attendance was nearly 100 percent. Also Sunday School attendance was good. We had a choir and the young people were active. My husband and I taught Bible School for two weeks each summer there.

It has been interesting to have lived in all these places, and we loved the people even though each place was different. A lot of changes have taken place since 1908, but one thing is the same: the Word of God is being preached now as it was years ago in our Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

We moved to Sioux Falls, S.D. in April 1949. My husband died in March 1956, and I've continued living there, but sold my big house where I had roomers and am renting a small apartment.

My son Clarence and family are living in Windom, Minn. and are employed there.

When my husband was at Warren, he also preached at Argyle. One of the confirmands there was Lottie Olson who married Ralph Taralseth, and he also confirmed my sister Cora Anderson, and she married Carl Knutson a neighbor in McCrea and lived at Viking for many years. She died in 1960 and is buried at Warren. Her husband Carl Knutson lived at the Good Samaritan Center in Warren where he just died last week. It would be fun to hear from someone up there, especially from someone in the McCrea vicinity, also Radium.

Mrs. Annette Hansen, a pioneer pastor's wife, Sioux Falls, SD. 🌸

For Annette

The years have been full and happy;
Friends have been many, dear and good
Life's work has been very fulfilling.
So many she's helped as she could.

Many loved ones and friends have gone
To the place their Savior prepared:
With knowing she'll meet her Master, too
For Him all her life she has cared.

She's taught so many about Jesus:
She's praised Him in music and song,
She's helped her husband spread the Word
In many parishes as time went along.

She's not rich in silver and gold,
Nor resplendent in clothing so fine
But rich in the "One Thing Needful,"
Like Dorcas, her good deeds shine.

Happy Birthday to you, Annette,
And praise for your ninety rich years
Of service to God and to others,
With joy as each new day appears.

Glendae Jungemann

Annette Hansen was, as she said, a pioneer pastor's wife. Her husband, Emil Hansen, one of the 13 original pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, served congregations in Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, and South Dakota.

Letters Home

By Mark DeGarmeaux

“Dear Father and Mother. Life in America is...”

There seems to be increasing interest in investigating immigrant life in America. Genealogy websites are plentiful. College courses explore this many-faceted issue. Descendants simply want to find out what life was like for grandma, great-grandpa, and ancestors farther back.

This interest is not uniquely American. European families, Norwegian families in particular, are keenly interested in learning about the connections between the old country and the new land, and their relatives in America.



Dr. Solveig Zempel of St. Olaf College has published a collection of letters translated from immigrants to family in Norway: *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*, published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1991.

Dr. Øyvind Gulliksen and colleagues in Norway have published a collection of “America letters” in Norwegian entitled *Saa nær hverandre*.

Another book that examines these connections is *Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism as Transatlantic Tradition*, edited by Todd Nichol. This book explores many different aspects of Norwegian immigration, including religious life. You can hear about the importance of the Catechism to a Civil War soldier. You can learn why horses got English names, while other animals had Norwegian names.

There’s much to be gained in reading such books: a sense of history, an appreciation of our past, knowing where we come from, and some spiritual encouragement. If you have book reviews or book recommendations, please send them to us at **Oak Leaves**. 🌿

Also check these links:

<http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/printlist.htm>

http://www.nb.no/html/norsk_amerikana.html

Mark DeGarmeaux is professor of Languages and Religious Studies at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN.

Norwegian Synod 150th Anniversary Medallions

Medallions commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Norwegian Synod are available through the Bethany Lutheran College bookstore.

The medallions were commissioned by the ELS Historical Society. They could be nice Christmas gifts, confirmation gifts, etc.

Contact:

Bethany Lutheran College Bookstore

700 Luther Drive

Mankato, MN 56001

E-mail: bookstor@blc.edu



From the Archives: “Name it!”

Can you identify this item from the archives? It is fairly obvious what it is, but we’d like to hear from alumni and friends of Bethany who can tell us how and when these banners were used or who wish to offer some memory this banner triggers.



From the last issue:



This is Hannah Ottesen, after whom the Ottesen Museum is named. She donated many items to get the museum started. She lived in Decorah, Iowa, with her parents after her father retired from the ministry. Her father was J. A. Ottesen, one of the founders of the old Norwegian Synod. He served Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church near Madison, Wisconsin.



Check out the new look of the Bethany Lutheran College website: www.blc.edu

Send us your ideas, articles, and suggestions for **Oak Leaves**. We welcome information and articles on church anniversaries, and articles of Synodical and local significance.

In the next issue: Anniversaries of ELS congregations and schools

Oak Leaves
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

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Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance
for publication. Articles maybe edited for style, clarity, or length to al-
low for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the
archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

MEMBERSHIP

All membership
renewals are due **June 1**

Voting Membership:

\$10/year: individual
\$15/year: husband & wife

Associate Membership:

\$15/year: individual
\$25/year: institutional
\$5/year: student

Lifetime Membership:

\$200