



January 2026 Newsletter

Happy New Year

It's **Dues Renewal Time** for 2026.

If you haven't renewed already, you have three options:

- Pay by check or cash at the February meeting,
- Send a check to EDCF, PO Box 1388, Placerville, Ca. 95667 by the end of February. Please make check payable to EDCF and put Sierra Renaissance Society on the memo line,
- Or go to the EDCF website and pay by credit card. The URL is listed below.

The dues are \$40 for the year and we thank you for your support.

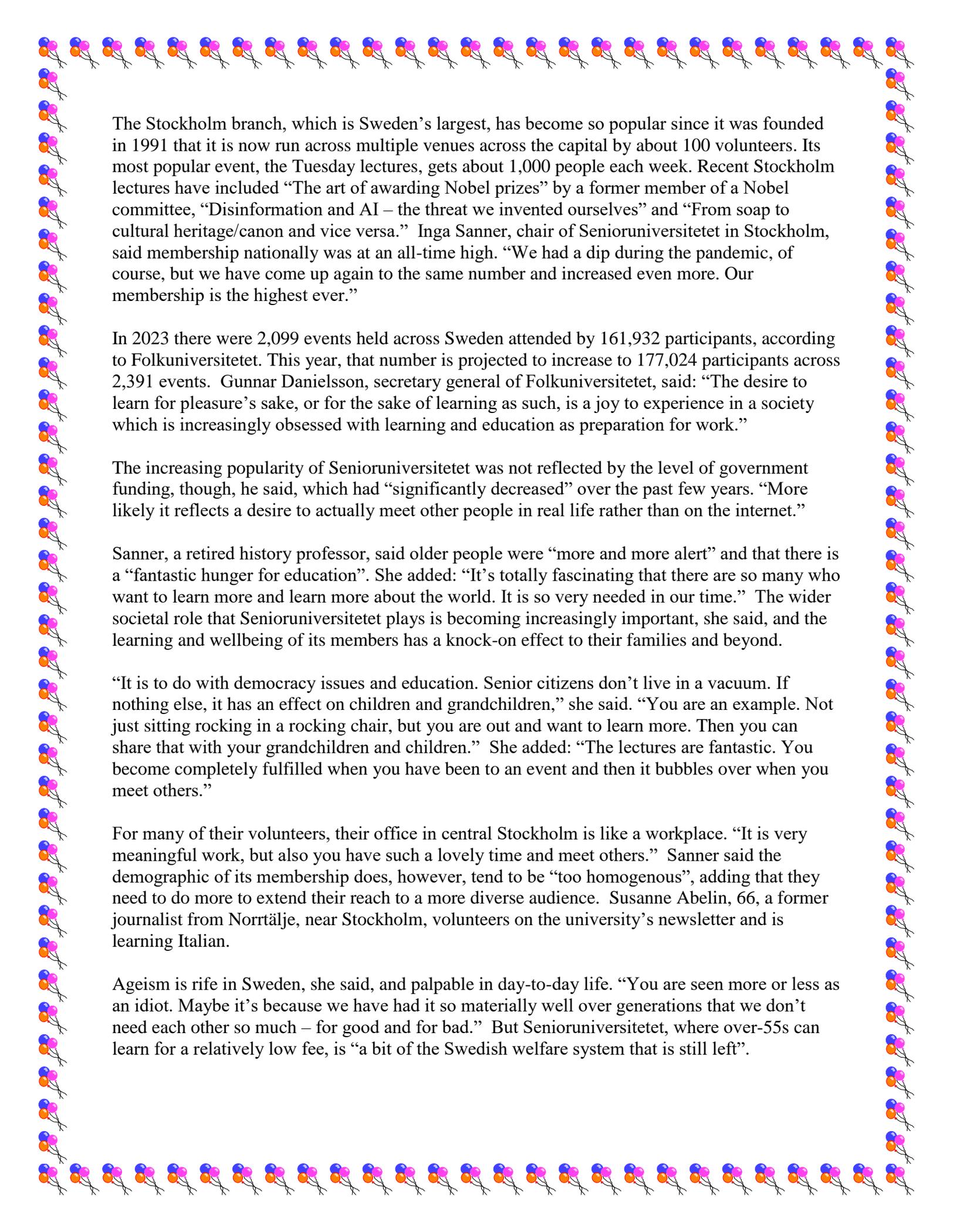
Link  [Renew your membership online](#)

An Article from The Gardian.com

Keeps your mind alert': older Swedes reap the benefits of learning for pleasure.

Retirees with 'fantastic hunger for education' taking part in university organized events in record numbers.

Record numbers of Swedish retirees are enrolling in a university run "by pensioners for pensioners" amid increased loneliness and a growing appetite for learning and in-person interactions. Senioruniversitet, a national university that collaborates with Sweden's adult education institution Folkuniversitetet, has about 30 independent branches around the country which run study circles, lecture series and university courses in subjects including languages, politics, medicine and architecture.



The Stockholm branch, which is Sweden's largest, has become so popular since it was founded in 1991 that it is now run across multiple venues across the capital by about 100 volunteers. Its most popular event, the Tuesday lectures, gets about 1,000 people each week. Recent Stockholm lectures have included "The art of awarding Nobel prizes" by a former member of a Nobel committee, "Disinformation and AI – the threat we invented ourselves" and "From soap to cultural heritage/canon and vice versa." Inga Sanner, chair of Senioruniversitetet in Stockholm, said membership nationally was at an all-time high. "We had a dip during the pandemic, of course, but we have come up again to the same number and increased even more. Our membership is the highest ever."

In 2023 there were 2,099 events held across Sweden attended by 161,932 participants, according to Folkuniversitetet. This year, that number is projected to increase to 177,024 participants across 2,391 events. Gunnar Danielsson, secretary general of Folkuniversitetet, said: "The desire to learn for pleasure's sake, or for the sake of learning as such, is a joy to experience in a society which is increasingly obsessed with learning and education as preparation for work."

The increasing popularity of Senioruniversitetet was not reflected by the level of government funding, though, he said, which had "significantly decreased" over the past few years. "More likely it reflects a desire to actually meet other people in real life rather than on the internet."

Sanner, a retired history professor, said older people were "more and more alert" and that there is a "fantastic hunger for education". She added: "It's totally fascinating that there are so many who want to learn more and learn more about the world. It is so very needed in our time." The wider societal role that Senioruniversitetet plays is becoming increasingly important, she said, and the learning and wellbeing of its members has a knock-on effect to their families and beyond.

"It is to do with democracy issues and education. Senior citizens don't live in a vacuum. If nothing else, it has an effect on children and grandchildren," she said. "You are an example. Not just sitting rocking in a rocking chair, but you are out and want to learn more. Then you can share that with your grandchildren and children." She added: "The lectures are fantastic. You become completely fulfilled when you have been to an event and then it bubbles over when you meet others."

For many of their volunteers, their office in central Stockholm is like a workplace. "It is very meaningful work, but also you have such a lovely time and meet others." Sanner said the demographic of its membership does, however, tend to be "too homogenous", adding that they need to do more to extend their reach to a more diverse audience. Susanne Abelin, 66, a former journalist from Norrtälje, near Stockholm, volunteers on the university's newsletter and is learning Italian.

Ageism is rife in Sweden, she said, and palpable in day-to-day life. "You are seen more or less as an idiot. Maybe it's because we have had it so materially well over generations that we don't need each other so much – for good and for bad." But Senioruniversitetet, where over-55s can learn for a relatively low fee, is "a bit of the Swedish welfare system that is still left".

Her Italian class has a WhatsApp group so they can stay in touch outside lessons and last year she went to Italy with one of her classmates. “I’m absolutely not fluent in Italian and will never be, but it is inspiring and it keeps your mind alert. Instead of doing crosswords and suduko you can study some verbs.” Joachim Forsgren, 71, a former physician who now volunteers for the Stockholm branch, has given lectures on “man and drugs” and tuberculosis.

Volunteering, he said, gives people a “sense of meaning and that they are contributing still”. He added: “People can get the feeling that they are not contributing once they leave their jobs. Pensioners is a word I hate.”

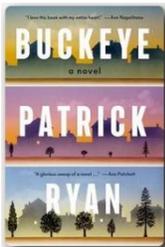
By volunteering, he said, “we are contributing to some kind of democracy project. This is really trying, especially in this day and age, to get people interested in what is going on”. Amid the rise of online disinformation and populism, the university helps people to “look critically at the amount of information we are almost drowning in every day”.

The Book Group meeting at the Placerville Main Library 345 Fair Lane,
Placerville from 1-3 PM

Book Group will be meeting in January Placerville Main Library

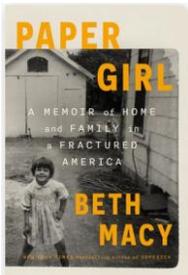
January 8, 2026

Buckeye by Patrick Ryan



Patrick Ryan's novel *Buckeye* begins in the small fictional town of Bonhomie, Ohio, on May 8th, 1945: V-E Day, the day that Germany surrendered to the Allies in World War II. Cal Jenkins is at work at his father-in-law's hardware store when a beautiful young woman dashes in, asking if he has a radio. He leads her to a workroom in the basement, where they hear the news that the war in Europe has ended and share a celebratory kiss—setting in motion events that will impact them, their spouses, and their children in the ensuing decades.

February Book *Paper Girl* by Beth Macy



Paper Girl is a gift of courage, empathy, and insight. Beth Macy has turned to face the darkness her family and community, people she loves wholeheartedly, even the ones she sometimes struggles to like. And in facing the truth—in person, with respect—she has found sparks of human dignity that she has used to light a signal fire of warning but also of hope.

Sierra Renaissance Society of El Dorado County Calendar		
2026 Dates	Presentation Subject	Speaker
January No Meeting	No Presentation	
February 20, 2026	Senior Health	Mindy Danovaro & Marshall staff
March 20, 2026	El Dorado Community Foundation, Reflections & Visions	Amy Pooley
April 17, 2026	Historic Hostility Over Healing Herbs: 17th Century Controversy and Culpeper or Historical Medical Alternatives	Roberta Bailey
May 15, 2026	Emergent Behavior and the Nexus with Philanthropy	Bill Roby
June 19, 2026	History of Lincoln Highway In El Dorado County	Mike Roberts & Jill Kearny
July 17, 2026	Ice Cream Social	
August 14, 2026	Native Plants of EDC	Kit Veerkamp
September 18, 2026	Eradicating Waterborne Disease in the Developing World	Richard Blodget
October 16, 2026	To Be Announced	TBA
November 20, 2026	SRS Biz Meeting & Veteran Speaker sister in war and peace???	TBA
December No Meeting	No Presentation	
All meetings will be held at the Mother Lode Lions Hall 4701 Missouri Flat Rd. Diamond Springs 1-3 PM		

What's Happening this Month and Next

Thursday
January 8th

Book Group meets 1-3 PM
Placerville Main Library
345 Fair Lane, Placerville

No Monthly Meetings in January

Thursday
February 12th

Book Group meets 1-3 PM
Placerville Main Library
345 Fair Lane, Placerville

Friday
February 20th

Monthly Meeting
4701 Missouri Flat Rd, Diamond Springs
Mother Lode Lions Hall 1-3 PM

Bill Robinson has videoed and converted the presentation to YouTube since 2022.

SRS Presentation 2022-2025 on YouTube

Title	Length	Date	Presenter(s)
Veteran's Panel	1:06:00	11/21/2025	Tim Whalen, Michael Berkery, Mike Muetz, Richard Morris, Robert Penn
The Future of Healthcare Services in Western El Dorado Co	1:13:00	10/17/2025	Mindy Danovaro & Maia Schneider
American River Conservancy's Wakamatsu Farm	1:13:48	9/19/2025	Melissa Lobach
American Inspirations: Where Music and Art Meet		8/15/2025	Keith Atwater
A Himalayan Adventure	1:27:53	6/20/2025	Steve & Dickson Schwarzbach
Get More Out of Life with Art	1:06:05	5/16/2025	Deborah Pond-Heide
Historical Fiction Novel Presentation	1:32:23	3/21/2025	Julia Park Tracey
El Dorado Agriculture: Past, Present, and Future	2:21:25	11/15/2024	Greg Boeger Charlie Mansfield Paul Bush
Wildlife in El Dorado County	1:33:49	10/18/2024	Judy Monestier
Yosemite: Then and Now	1:15:03	9/20/2024	Cheryl Purgett
How Development has Affected Wildlife	1:27:48	8/16/2024	Shelly Blair
Save the Graves	1:12:26	8/17/2024	Mike Roberts
County of El Dorado General Plan Overview	1:48:15	8/18/2024	Bret Sampson
Medicine in the News	1:34:06	8/19/2024	Ted Christy, MD
American River Conservancy	1:04:16	8/20/2024	Elena DeLacy
From Dick & Jane to Digitation in Education	1:18:30	8/21/2024	Margaret Maughn
Mushrooms of El Dorado County and Beyond	1:26:05	8/22/2024	Mike Davis
Gold Rush History Through Music	1:17:13	8/23/2024	Alan Fuller
Abstract Art Presentation	1:01:44	8/24/2024	Lucia Rothgeb
Geneology and Your Family History	1:07:55	8/25/2024	Debbie Hutchison
America's Home Grown Religions	1:24:59	8/26/2024	Keith Atwater
Today's Library	1:43:05	8/27/2024	Krystal Owens
Creating a Fire Adapted and Resilient El Dorado County	1:34:44	8/28/2024	Ken Pimlott
HoneyBees & Flowers to Feed the Bees	1:23:34	8/29/2024	John Havicon & Janna Buwalda
Our Sierras Got Style!	1:06:33	8/30/2024	Keith Atwater
Climate Change	49:03	8/31/2024	Steven Schwarzbach
Skeletons in the Closet: Gold Rush Stories of El Dorado County	1:13:08	9/1/2024	Nancy Porter
Better SmartPhone Photography	1:01:51	9/2/2024	Bill Robinson
World Religions	1:10:13	9/3/2024	Margaret Maughn
History of Native American Tribes in Our Region	1:26:04	9/4/2024	Guy Nixon
Helping Community Love & Respect Each Other	1:21:28	9/5/2024	David Zelinsky

A Link to You Tube videos of previous presentations:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sierrarenaissancesociety6812>

A PDF of the newsletter can be found on the SRSedc.com website at the link below:

[Newsletter in PDF link](#)

Sierra Renaissance Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.