

VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization since 1896

Vol. 20, No. 1

January 1996



OUR JANUARY 5 BUSINESS meeting will begin at 7 pm. Annual reports are due, so if you hold an office that requires a report, please get working on it now. We will have election of delegates to the district convention in April and initiation of new members. The new officers will provide refreshments.

Chairman's Message

As we look forward to 1996 and the 100th anniversary of the Vasa Order of America, Monitor Lodge will spend the year "remembering when." Be prepared for surprises, old-fashioned fun, and lots of memories. Please keep referring to the 1996 calendar you received with last month's newsletter so you won't miss anything. In February, we'll have our first dinner: Swedish pea soup and pancakes.

We had a full house for our *Glögg* and *Smörgåsbord* party. Thanks to all our good cooks, there was lots and lots of food. A special *tusen tack* to Lars and Birgitta Ostlund, our *glögg* makers and party coordinators. *Tack* also to everyone who helped set up, work in the kitchen, clean up, etc. Ernie Skorheim, Ed Dahlberg, and Myrtle Widmark are among those who came early and worked hard. We received a lot of compliments on how much

more fun this *smörgåsbord* was than our past "public" ones.

Hope you all enjoyed the children's *Luciafest* also. Christi Kagstrom deserves lots of kudos for a job well done. This year, our Lucia was Anna Canady. We had standing room only and a lot of compliments. *Jultomten* came and handed out gifts to the children as well as goodie bags. All the children appreciated your support and help. All in all, it was a most enjoyable evening!

Anyone interested in having children or grandchildren join the Children's Club, contact Christi Kagstrom at 641-8770. They have fun learning Swedish songs, folk dances, crafts, etc.

Hope to see you often during the coming year. *Gott Nytt År!*

In Truth and Unity,
Margaret Carlson

For More Information about Monitor Lodge, Please Contact

- Membership Committee members Jean Anderson 682-7438, Ethel Johnson 457-0966, or Eivor Pfannkuch 673-5917
- Secretary Marianne Ek at 372-1015
- Vice Chairman Arthur Niemoller, 631-9330
- Chairman Margaret Carlson, 742-9346

Installation of Officers

We will have a joint installation of officers with Sierra Kroman Lodge in Roseville on **Friday, January 12, 7:30 pm**. All our officers need to attend, so please mark this on your calendar.

This is also an excellent opportunity for Monitor members to visit another lodge and meet their members. Sierra Kroman's business meeting starts at 6:30. Their meeting place is at the Roseville Veterans' Hall (in the basement), Sutter Avenue & Park Drive by Rover Park in Roseville. Take the Douglas exit off I-80.



New member?

If you are a new member and would like to get involved, please volunteer your help. We will be having a busy year and everyone's support is urgently needed. It is a great way to get to know the other members and have a lot of fun too.



Deadline

for the February newsletter is **Friday, January 15**. Please send input to Ingrid Kennedy, 10582 Apple Grove Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

January Dues Anniversaries

If you have already paid, please ignore this reminder and thank you for your promptness.

Gerda Anderson
Vera Anderson
Britt-Marie & Lennart Anderson
Thelma & Charles Badgley
Edwin Cook
Birgit Dillard
Jack & Estrid Doscher
Kathleen Goldsberry
Jeanne & Stanley Hagstrom
Kerstin & Kjell Hakansson
Dale Ingvarsdén
Herb & Mildred Johnson
Karin Johnson
Charles Linn
Berthell & Charles Nelson
Birgitta Ostlund
Cecilia Segerstedt
Frank & Gladys Stangl
Helen Starkey
Joyce Trnka
Arlie Veis

Dues are \$18 a year, payable to Monitor Lodge No. 218. You may pay them at the January meeting or by mail to our financial secretary, Gail Nemy, 4239 Daybreak Lane, Sacramento, CA 95821.

Lost and Found

Are you missing a favorite dish? Did you leave an umbrella at the *Smörgåsbord*? We also have several children's jackets and Christmas decorations. We would like to reunite these things with their owners, so please check the cupboards at our meeting hall.

The lodge is still missing six of our brown thermos coffee servers. Some of our yellow table cloths are also missing. Can you help us relocate these items?



1/04 - Cecilia Segerstedt
1/06 - Edna Anderson
1/07 - Robert Anderson
1/07 - Thomas Anderson
1/08 - Don Carlson
1/08 - Gladys Stangl
1/09 - Leisma Krastins
1/12 - Phil Olson
1/16 - Billie Nelson
1/21 - LaVerne Gullans
1/21 - Nancy Maddox
1/22 - Thelma Badgley
1/24 - Brian Stockham
1/25 - Viola Bodelson
1/30 - Linda Becker
1/25 - Birgitta Ellis
1/27 - Ed Dahlberg
1/29 - Jewel Wright



Friendship Notes

Joie Gustafson (wife of Don Gustafson) passed away December 3 after a long illness. Margaret Carlson and Ernie Skorheim attended the memorial service which was held at the Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church.

Myrtle Widmark lost her brother recently.

Monitor members a bit under the weather are Millie Johnson, Margaret Skicklig, and both Viola and Karin Bodelson. Our thoughts are with you all.

On a happier note, George Uffens is now home and would love to hear from his old friends.

Also, the lodge got a Christmas card from Sue Bergman with greetings for everyone. She says she misses us all. It was nice hearing from you, Sue.

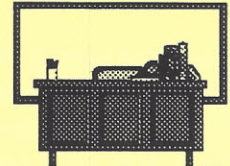


Roster Changes

We have a new phone number for John and Mai Loken: 619/596-2009. And an address change:

Lilmer Olson
390 North Winchester Blvd
#1-2K
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Swedish Classes



We are progressing well with reading, grammar, and conversation. Two students from our early intermediate class are travelling to Sweden this Christmas. One student is going to the Östersund area and another student with his wife to Oskarshamn on the southeastern coast. We're wishing them *trevlig resa* and a safe return.

Beginner classes start again on **Monday, January 8, at 7 pm** and the early intermediate students will meet on **Tuesday, January 16, at 7 pm**.

— Birgitta Ellis

Four Kinds of Bones

Someone recently said the membership of every organization is made up four kinds of bones:

There are the Wishbones who spend all their time wishing someone else would do the work.

There are the Jawbones who do all the talking but very little else.

Next there are the Knucklebones who knock everything that everyone else tries to do.

Finally there are the Backbones who get under the load and get things done.

Runestones

Runestones (*runstenar* in Swedish) are stones bearing the runic characters of the earliest Teutonic alphabet. Some also portray ships, warriors, and other designs. They can be found in a number of areas in Scandinavia and date from as far back as the beginning of the Christian era. There are about 2,500 runestones in Sweden and a few hundred in Norway, Denmark, and the Viking colonies, such as the Faroe Islands, the Isle of Man, and Russia.

Scholars are still not in agreement about the origins of the runes. A few of the rune letters are identical to Latin letters and one theory is that the runes were originally the simpler form of letters used by the common Greeks and Romans in notes, letters, and graffiti. The lettering was picked up by the Goths from Roman legionnaires around 700 A.D. and then redesigned to fit the new medium: wood. That's why there are no round or vertical lines which were difficult to carve on a wood surface. The word *runa* meant "secret," and magic and varying degrees of power were given to the different letters.

Many of the earliest inscriptions (ca 400 A.D.) were placed on earthen or stone grave mounds and nearly all are now illegible except for an occasional phrase or name. The stones from the Viking times (700-1060 A.D.) are in better condition.

Inscriptions on runestones are generally quite simple and strangely enough never involve any of the historically famous people of the time. They are usually memorials. Some mark

landing places for boats. Other stones indicate the sites of bridges over now dried-up rivers. It is the illustrations that accompany the texts that are the more spectacular. They teach us a lot about Viking life, dreams, and aspirations. It is on the runestones that we see the first skier ever to be depicted.

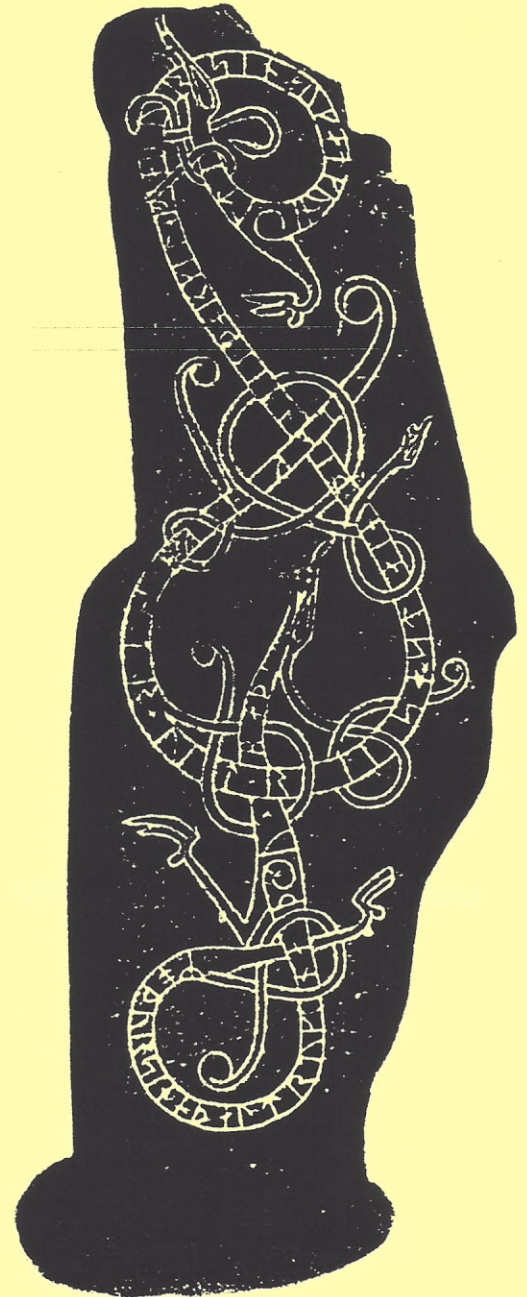
The inscriptions have been translated into modern Swedish only in the last century. Some stones have been known for hundreds of years, while others have been found as recently as in the middle of our century. They range in height from three to nine feet. All such memorials by Sweden's earliest settlers are protected by law. The skills demonstrated by the artists vary greatly; some are plain and even awkwardly made while other were true masters of the art.

From ancient historians we know that the Vikings placed wooden signs with runes on top of their dead. They also used runes on wooden slabs for notes, and wooden sticks with runes for perpetual calendars. Very few rune inscriptions on wood have survived, however, so this is why the runestones are such treasures.

If you visit the Stockholm area, many runestones can be viewed in the northern suburb of Täby. In fact, they are so plentiful there that the Russian Byzantine double cross design on one of them has been adopted as the town's coat-of-arms. These runestones date from the 11th century, in the latter days of the Vikings, when Christianity was young in this area. On many, the Christian cross has a prominent position. A pagan serpent design is found in

some form on all, however, and this serpent carries the runes of the inscription.

Summary of articles in Swedish Press, June 1994



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