

The Monitor

VASA ORDER OF AMERICA
A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization since 1896

Vol 21. No. 6

June-July 1997

ON FRIDAY, JUNE 6, IT WILL BE THE LADIES' TURN to entertain the men in honor of Father's Day. They are planning a Swedish potluck. Refreshments start at 6:00 PM and dinner is served at 6:30. All women are asked to bring their favorite dish to serve at least 12 people. If you don't have time to cook a main dish, everyone loves desserts—or bring both! There will be no charge for this dinner.

Expect a nice program. We will also have a short business meeting to initiate new members.

This will be our last meeting before the summer, so plan to attend and have a fun evening of good food and fellowship.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As the month of June approaches, ending this season of activity, maybe we should take a few moments to consider where we, as a Swedish-American Fraternal Organization, have come from and where we want to go.

The first half of 1997 has seen some significant changes in the way we do business. The format of our meetings is significantly different in that order and ritual have given way to food and entertainment.

Separate business meetings—once a rarity—are now the rule (the net effect of which is that the day-to-day activities of the Lodge are in the hands of the few members dedicated enough to attend). Then there is money. Our deemphasis on fund raising has shifted the increased costs of doing business directly onto the general membership.

I'm not faulting these trends, just asking: Is this what you members want? The limited feedback I've received indicates that it is, but without the forum of the old style business meeting, it is difficult for all to be heard. So, contact me or one of the other officers and let us know how you feel!!!

Hopefully, all of you who attended our celebration of Mother's Day enjoyed the fine food and entertainment as much as I did. I assume that all you mothers, not wanting to be outdone, will do as well at our June Father's Day potluck supper.

Please take note of all our upcoming summer events and plan to attend. Keep in mind also that this newsletter is our last for the summer. The next issue will come out at the end of August, announcing our fall activities.

*In Truth and Unity
Art Niemoller*

Initiations

Heads up, all prospective members! We will have member initiation ceremonies at the Father's Day pot luck on Friday, June 6. If you have submitted your application and paid the necessary fees, please make sure to come to this meeting. We will not have initiations again until the fall.

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For More Information

about Monitor Lodge, please contact one of the following:

■ Membership Committee members Eivor Pfannkuch, 673-5917, Astrid Broess, 791-4463, or Michelle Kaufman at 451-3075

■ Secretary Brian Stockham, 683-3078

■ Vice Chairman Marianne Ek, 372-1015

■ Chairman Arthur Niemoller, 631-9330

Deadline

for the August-September newsletter is **Friday, August 15, 1997**. Please send input to Ingrid Kennedy, 10582 Apple Grove Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-2317. Or you can send it to my e-mail address **iken@gvn.net**. My work phone is 643-3900.

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✓ Report on District Convention, 26-27 April 1997 ✓

The 82nd Convention of Golden Gate District Lodge No. 12 emphasized the need for less formality in meeting format and a more receptive attitude to membership of other Scandinavians. (The Vasa Order began accepting all Scandinavians as members in the 1940s.) Lodges in areas that lack enough Scandinavian descendants to form separate organizations are pushing to make the Vasa Order of America into more of a generally Scandinavian, rather than specifically Swedish, organization. At the district level, it seems to be a practice to refer to the Vasa Order as an organization "to promote and preserve the heritage of Scandinavia." There is also a definite trend towards making local lodge meetings less ritualistic in the belief that "antiquated" rituals turn away prospective young members necessary to keep the lodges alive and growing.

Resolutions:

97-01, requiring District Executive Board members to visit at least two events at local lodges other than their own lodge, was voted down. Monitor delegates voted yes.

97-02, which excluded past district masters from active membership of the District Lodge, was defeated unanimously following heated opposition. Monitor delegates voted no.

97-03, requiring the District Executive Board to elect a five-member Nominating Committee no less than 90 days prior to the convention, was approved. Monitor delegates voted yes.

97-04 and 97-05, deleting references to the disbanded Sick Benefit Fund, were passed. Monitor voted yes. (The \$31,000 remaining in the fund will temporarily stay in the custody of Jessie Olsson.)

97-06: Monitor's amendment to add the words "Swedish and other" prior to "Scandinavian culture and heritage" was defeated. The resolution was adopted with a minor grammatical clarification to read: "The sharing, learning, and preservation of Scandinavian culture and heritage shall be the focus of our organization." The proposed amendment received only about one-third of the votes.

There is a trend towards less formality and greater inclusion.

Rituals Committee Report

The Rituals Committee report summarized suggestions submitted by lodge members and listed committee recommendations based on these suggestions. The convention delegates empowered the incoming District Executive Board to take the following actions at the 1998 Grand Lodge Convention:

a. Submit a resolution stating that prescribed rituals MAY—rather than SHALL—be used at lodge meetings to provide greater discretion in the use of rituals. The ideas behind this resolution are that when rituals are performed, the procedures (left page instructions) should be only optional guidelines; the use of regalia should also be optional; and lodges should be able to conduct the entire meeting, including rituals, as an open meeting. Many delegates emphasized that when

rituals are used, they must be performed correctly and be well rehearsed.

b. Submit a petition to the Grand Lodge to file "also known as" paperwork to allow the use of the name "Swedish-American Order of Vasa to provide instant recognition of our heritage in phone listings and at public events.

c. Request that the Grand Lodge research and consider redefining the purpose of the Vasa Order of America as an "educational and cultural" rather than "fraternal" organization.

Elections

The following members were elected to top District offices:

District Master: Bob Bergman, Linnea
 Vice District Master: Perr Cardestam, Svea
 Secretary: Marie-Ann Hill, Tegner
 Treasurer: Scott Matthews, Sierra Kronan

Outgoing District Master Lilian Rejbrand was elected Grand Lodge Delegate with Craig Peterson as the alternate.

Several Monitor members were elected to hold District offices:

Kurt Pfannkuch, Trustee for three years
 Myrtle Widmark, Assistant Master of Ceremonies

(Continued on page 3)

(Convention report continued from page 2)

Eivor Pfannkuch, District Youth Supervisor
Margaret Carlson, reelected as District

Historian

Monitor members were also appointed district deputies: Myrtle Widmark to Nord Lodge, Kurt Pfannkuch to Reno, Eivor Pfannkuch to Sierra Kronan, and Don Johnson to Gold Nugget Lodge.

Report from Resort Center Committee

The Golden Gate Resort Center (GGRC) Site Review Committee has been gathering information on more than a dozen sites suitable for a resort center along the Interstate 80 corridor in Placer

Country with special focus on properties at Alta, the home of many residents of Scandinavian heritage and of Camp Norway.

Unfortunately, the bidding on a particularly attractive property was well out of range for the current GGRC treasury. There are still lots of opportunities and options to



explore, however. The next meeting of the GGRC shareholders and interested Vasa members to discuss possible new courses of action will be held at 10:30 on Sunday, June 8, at Camp Norge in conjunction with the Sweden Day Picnic Weekend.

Other Actions/Information

➤ Suggestions were made that District Conventions be held only every other year, but no action was taken on this subject.

➤ A committee was established to produce a brochure on the purpose, activities, and membership eligibility of the Vasa Order of America as handout to prospective members throughout the district.

➤ The Library Account was deleted with the \$5.00 balance going to the General Fund. The Spring Festival Account and the Swedish Traveler Account in the General Fund were disbanded and the funds were moved to the Cultural Account.

➤ A request was made that articles to *The Vasa Star* deal less with ordinary lodge meetings and more with culture, special events, fund raisers, committee projects, scholarships, etc.

➤ The district is establishing a list of members' e-mail addresses. Members who have e-mail can send

their addresses to the District Membership Chairman at cbolsons@aol.com.

➤ District No. 12 has adopted the Salvation Army as its main charity. However, the delegates recognized that the various lodges might have certain local projects at heart and that they have the autonomy to choose their own charities.

➤ As an aside, several delegates had noticed that the Vasa Order is consistently referred to as "VASA" at the district level (such as in the district newsletter). This has caused some confusion in that nonmembers assume that "VASA" in capital letters is an acronym and ask what it stands for.

Next Convention

The 1998 district convention will be held at Flamingo Hotel in Santa Rosa, hosted by Linnea Lodge. Extracurricular activities will include golf and bowling, a wine tour, and tours to the Armstrong redwoods, Farmers Market, Bodega Bay, the Luther Burbank Museum, and various restaurants.

– Submitted by Convention Delegates
Ingrid Kennedy, Liesma Krastin, Gail Nemy, Betty Schoepf

Anyone interested in being a delegate to next year's district convention, be sure to contact Art Niemoller (or our then current chairman) well in advance. It's a worthwhile experience. Monitor Lodge is eligible to send four delegates.

Next Year's Officers

The Nominating Committee is working on a slate of officers for next year. They will be contacting members to serve as officers or appointees. If you are interested in running for office or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact Margaret Carlson at 742-9346 or Brian Stockham at 683-3078.

Glad
Midsommar!



Upcoming Events

This is to remind you of events scheduled this summer. For details, see also our May newsletter.

■ Our **Sillfrukost on 31 May, 10:30 am**, is coming up fast. Remember to call the Pfannkuchs (673-5917) to let them know you're coming. The price is only \$5. Here are the directions again: Go north on Highway 99. Just before Yuba City, turn right on Bogue Road, go about three blocks, and turn left on Columbia Drive. The house number is 1921.

■ **Sweden Day** is celebrated at Camp Norge 7-8 June. Bring your own meat for the Saturday night supper (refrigerators are available). For overnight lodging, call Kurt Pfannkuch at 673-5917.

■ Note that the date for the **Ice Cream Social** has been changed to **July 19** at the home of the Stockhams, 10931 Bruceville Road in Elk Grove. We'll be entertained by a group of 26 Swedish singers, so this promises to be a big event. A lot of help is needed. Please call Birgitta Ostlund (682-2285) to volunteer. We also need homes willing to put one or two of the singers up for the night.

■ Our very popular annual crayfish party will be held on **Saturday, August 23, 7:00 pm**, at the home of Ken and Peggy Carlson, 4408 Kenneth Avenue (off Sunset). The party will be preceded by a short **business meeting at 6:30**. Crayfish will be furnished by the lodge, but everything else is potluck. Please bring chairs and a card table also if you can.



Thank You

This is a big **TACK SÅ MYCKET** to all the volunteers who gave so much of their time and effort to the Nordic Fest at California State University at Sacramento on April 26. We can all be proud of what we were able to accomplish under the circumstances. It didn't rain, everyone pitched in and seemed to have an enjoyable time talking, enjoying the good food and entertainment, and availing ourselves of the excellent vendors. Again, thank you very much!

- John and Jewel Wright

Happy Birthday!

6/01 - June Brown
 6/02 - Audrey Olson-Smith
 6/02 - Inger Thornros
 6/07 - Violet Backman
 6/08 - Gilbert Holm
 6/09 - Beatrix Clerk
 6/10 - Beatrice Mattson
 6/15 - Elizabeth Johnson
 6/17 - Edmund Nelson
 6/20 - Barbara Mecci-Erickson
 6/20 - Frank Stangl
 6/30 - Monica Eriksson
 7/07 - Herb Johnson
 7/10 - Eivor Pfannkuch
 7/11 - Ernest Skorheim
 7/15 - Roy Sjogren
 7/16 - Camilla Holm
 7/16 - Patricia T. Page
 7/18 - John Ericson
 7/18 - Madeleine Hallstrom
 7/24 - Ingegerd Kennedy
 7/24 - Joyce Johnson
 7/31 - Leo Krastins



Tracing Your Roots?

The Scandinavian Genealogy Society (Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish) welcomes individuals to join the society to help create their family histories. The Society meets the second Wednesday of each month and will be starting again this fall in September. Contact Leigh Ballard at 481-5368 or Daysha Gregory at 484-6758 for more information.

Where are They?

According to the 1990 census, approximately 4,700,000 Americans claim to be of Swedish heritage. California has the greatest number with 585,772 followed (not surprisingly) by Minnesota with 536,203. Illinois has 374,965 and Washington 257,953. West Virginia has the fewest Swedish Americans with only 6,856.



Condensed Minutes from May 13 Business Meeting

1. The meeting opened at 7:20 pm, roll was called, and the April minutes were approved as published.
2. Four applications for membership had been received.
3. Viola Hallen is still recovering from a fall. Joyce Trnka has been ill and probably will not be able to attend the June meeting when she would have received her anniversary pin. Violet Backman had serious eye surgery. We have missed Herb and Millie Johnson lately and hope everything is OK.
4. Arrangements for the 26 Swedish singers who will entertain at our potluck/ice cream social were discussed at length. They will need sleeping quarters for one or two nights.
5. Revised guidelines for the awarding of lodge scholarships were discussed and adopted. Scholarships will be made out to the recipients. Two scholarships will be granted this year.
6. Despite a smaller attendance, the net income from the Scandinavian Festival was \$3,807. Each participating lodge will receive \$600 with the remainder going to preparations for next year's festival.
7. Betty Schoepf has copies of bylaw updates.
8. Sweden Day raffle tickets have arrived and will be on sale at the *Fars Dag* dinner and the *sillfrukost*.
9. Correspondence included a letter reminding us that each lodge needs to donate a prize for the Sweden Day raffle.
10. A letter was received from Balder Lodge with compliments on the Monitor newsletter and a \$5 check towards postage. Thanks, Balder Lodge!
11. The meeting decided to charge \$5 for the herring breakfast. The *Fars Dag* dinner will be free.
12. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

- Brian Stockham, Secretary

Folk Music

If you are interested in the Scandinavian folk tradition, you must get a new CD by Lena Willemark and Ale Möller called Agram. Multi-instrumentalist Möller and singer/fiddler/viola player Willemark have selected songs that are hundreds of years old and combined them with new material they have written for this interesting CD. For more information you can send a fax to 212-288-3462.

June-July Dues Anniversaries

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

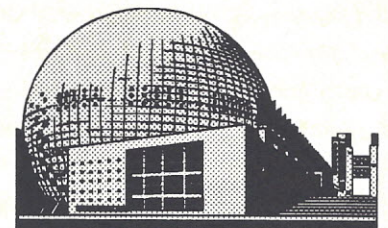
Daniel and Violet Backman
Linda Becker
Don Carlson
Beatrix Clark
Ellen Harrod
Liesma Krastins
Frank Lindahl
Nancy Maddox
Beatrice and Harold Mattson
Francies and Nancy Misenti
Dorothy Mogford
Billie and Edmund Nelson
April and Carl Nelson
Launna Nelson
Ernest and Juanita Skorheim
John and Jewel Wright
Birgitta Ellis
Henry Hjersman
Donn and Lillian Stafford
Sigrid Thorsen

Dues are \$18 a year, payable to Monitor Lodge No. 218. You may pay them at the June meeting or by mail to our financial secretary, Karin Dorey, 2434 Stokewood Way, Racho Cordova, CA. If you would like a receipt and membership card, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Please call Karin (858-8568) if you have questions or there are errors on this list.

Olympics in Stockholm?

Stockholm is one of five candidate cities shortlisted for final selection to host the 2004 Olympic Summer Games. [Last time was in 1912.] The decision will be made on September 5 and it is now up to each candidate to improve its concept. For Stockholm, the most important challenge is to sway local public opinion in favor of holding the games. There has been a small shift in public opinion recently but Stockholm is facing stiff competition from Athens, Buenos Aires, Capetown, and Rome.



- From Swedish Press, Apr 97

Monitor's Inventor

This is the second and last part of a 1996 article by Oliver E. Allen, continued from the May newsletter:

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the Union needed armored ships and during the summer of 1861, an Ironclad Board was set up to solicit plans for such vessels. The board did not send for Ericsson. On his own, he wrote to President Lincoln describing his new design and offering to come to Washington to explain it. Nothing happened; the letter apparently never reached the President.

But word reaching Washington from within the Confederacy brought a new sense of urgency. The Southern forces now had a rebuilt *Merrimack* that could wreak severe damage among the North's wooden warships in nearby Hampton Roads and potentially break the North's blockade of the Confederacy. By chance, an acquaintance of Ericsson happened to meet up with Cornelius Bushnell, who had submitted a design to the Ironclad Board. The acquaintance told him of Ericsson's many ideas about ironclad construction, and Bushnell took the night train to New York to see Ericsson. Bushnell asked to borrow the model of the *Monitor*. The Secretary of the Navy was impressed and the model was, in turn, shown to President Lincoln. The Ironclad Board, however, voted it down and Bushnell knew there was only one thing to do: Get Ericsson to meet with the board. Ericsson, remembering past slights, at first refused but his desire to help his adopted homeland finally won out. His masterful presentation, during which he promised to deliver the craft in a hundred days at a cost of only \$275,000, turned the board around.

The craft, which was unlike anything previously constructed, drew on the experience and observations of a lifetime. The low profile, Ericsson said, stemmed from his recollection of timber rafts on Swedish lakes, which could ride out storms unaffected. His knowledge of steam engines enabled him to design a most efficient power plant, while his work on the *Princeton* and other projects had made him an artillery expert as well as an authority on armor. The Navy's contract—when it arrived weeks after work had begun—was prohibitive: Ericsson would be fully paid only if the ship proved herself in battle; if she failed, all monies would have to be returned. On January 20, 1862, Ericsson wrote the Assistant Secretary of the Navy proposing that the ship be called the *Monitor*, as she would prove a "severe monitor" to Confederate leaders who hoped to destroy Union shipping. The name was adopted.

The sheer drama of the contest between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* has overshadowed the fact that the *Monitor* almost did not get to the battle at all. As she was proceeding down the New Jersey coast, a furious storm struck and she almost went down. An overly cautious shipyard hand, without Ericsson's knowledge, had stuffed the turret track with oakum in a misguided attempt to make it watertight. When sections of the oakum washed away in the storm, the water poured in. The pumps could not keep up, and only the providential relenting of the storm saved the vessel. When she arrived in Chesapeake Bay on March 8, 1862, her crew was exhausted and many were sick.

As she made her way toward Hampton Roads, the crew heard the sound of explosions and saw black smoke to the west. That very day the just-completed *Merrimack* had emerged from Norfolk Harbor and was attacking the wooden Union warships blockading the port. Before the day was over, she had destroyed two major ships and was severely threatening a third. The Union leaders were in a state of near panic; in theory, the *Merrimack* could steam right up the Potomac and shell Washington.

The *Monitor* was ready the next morning, however. When the *Merrimack* steamed out to finish her work of the day before, the little craft—only one-fourth her tonnage—sallied forth to meet her. The two ships pounded each other for four hours. The battle has been called a draw, as neither vessel was put out of action, but at the end it was the *Merrimack* that withdrew. And her officers knew they had met a confoundingly better ship. The *Monitor*, after firing her guns, would revolve her turret to present a blank iron wall to the enemy and, as one *Merrimack* officer later said, "It did not appear that our shell had any effect" on her. Meanwhile, the *Monitor's* shells were buckling the opponent's armor plate. No matter which ship was technically the victor, the Confederate threat against the Northern blockade had been eradicated. The revolutionary *Merrimack*, which had suddenly made wooden ships obsolete, had been trumped by a ship that was even more revolutionary and showed the way to the warships of the modern era. (Continued on page 7)

Monitor's Inventor (continued from page 6)

Now a national hero, Ericsson kept on working. If weapons became deadlier, he believed, mankind might perhaps realize the futility of war. The answer to ships like the *Monitor* was the torpedo, and in the 1870s he not only designed a 25-foot torpedo carrying an explosive charge but also built, at his own expense, a mean-looking low-lying craft named the *Destroyer* for launching the torpedo underwater, a forerunner of the modern submarine. Tests were successful, but the Navy and Congress were not interested.

Ericsson lived quietly, zealously guarding his privacy. Surprisingly, he rejected the inventions of others, refusing to have a telephone installed and banning the typewriter; his house had no bathrooms and no furnace. The neighborhood was deteriorating and becoming overrun with rats. He invented an elaborate rat trap in his workroom, one Ericsson invention that did not work. "As a place for keeping cheese in safety," remarked a draftsman working for the old man, "it answered admirably."

On more serious matters, Ericsson continued to see into the future. The world would one day run out of conventional fuels, he said, and so must look to the sun for power. He built an observatory on his roof and in his last years was actively pursuing the potential of solar power.

John Ericsson died on March 8, 1889, at the age of 85, and a year later his body was conveyed with honors back to Sweden. His house on Beach Street (since renamed Ericsson Place) was torn down in 1921, but today on the wall of the larger building next door can be seen the mark of its roof line, the lingering vestige of the irritable genius who was the father of the modern warship and one of the most illustrious inventors of the nineteenth century. Too late for him to enjoy, Congress finally came to its senses in the early 1890s and paid him for his work on the *Princeton*.

Promoting Understanding

The **American Scandinavian Foundation** is an educational and cultural exchange organization founded in 1910 to promote understanding between the United States and the five Nordic countries. It is also a membership organization and here are some of the benefits:

- * A travel program that offers special member rates to the Nordic countries from 22 US gateways.

- * A year's subscription to *Scandinavian Review* (three issues), a magazine with illustrated articles on Nordic culture, peoples, and politics.

- * The quarterly newsletter *Scan*, which highlights cultural events, foundation activities, and "News of Scandinavia."

- * A special "Books & Gifts" mail order service with discounts and free shipping for members.

A variety of membership levels are available. One is National Associate \$35 which covers a year's subscription to *Scandinavian Review* and to *Scan*, special members' book and gift offerings, and travel opportunities. The same benefits are offered for a Senior Citizen/Student \$25 membership.

If you're interested in joining or learning more about this foundation, write to The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Phone 212-879-9779. Fax 212-249-3444.

If You're Swedish, Don't Smoke!

Swedes are more susceptible to emphysema than any other people in the world according to an article in the Stockholm daily *Dagens Nyheter* of 28 Dec 96. A 20-year Swedish study has revealed that one in 1,500 Swedes suffers an antitrypsin deficiency that increases the risk for emphysema. The enzyme antitrypsin ordinarily protects the elasticity of the lungs from breaking down due to smoking or air pollutants.

Swedish scientists have concluded that a gene mutation occurred among the Swedish population a very long time ago which was then inherited and even spread to other parts of the world, starting with the Vikings. This research team is recommending that all Swedish babies routinely be given the simple blood test that discloses which babies suffer this deficiency and, therefore, need to be extra careful throughout their lives when it comes to smoking and air pollution.



More Internet

Here's the address to the Swedish culture site at the Mining Company:

<http://swedishculture.miningco.com>

**Monitor Lodge No. 218
Vasa Order of America
10582 Apple Grove Way
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670**

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