

The Monitor

VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization since 1896

Vol 21, No. 8

October 1997

THE OCTOBER 3 MEETING will have a little bit of everything. It will be a dinner meeting. We'll be having generous portions of Swedish *kålpudding* (mainly cabbage and ground meat) with potatoes, lingon-berries, and a salad for only \$5.00. Refreshments start at 6:00 PM and dinner is served at 6:30.

There will also be a short business meeting to elect new officers (listed below) and to vote on proposed activities for 1998. In addition, our cultural leaders are planning an excellent program.



Slate of Officers

Chairman - Art Niemoller
Vice Chairman - Marianne Ek
Secretary - David Benson
Asst Secretary - Jillian Stanley
Financial Secretary - Karin Dorey
Asst Fin. Secy. - Ingrid Kennedy
Treasurer - Betty Schoepf
Cultural Leader - Birgitta Ellis
Chaplain - Helen Jenson
Master of Ceremonies -
Lisma Krastins
Asst Master of Ceremonies -
Jewel Wright
Inner Guard - Richard Eriksson
Outer Guard - Michael Churkin
Historian - Gail Nemy



Chairman's Message

I'm sure you are all aware of the significant changes that have taken place in the way Monitor Lodge has been doing business this past year. We have cut back on the meeting rituals and structure and the way we conduct business in order to spend more time socializing. Hopefully, we have all had enough time to form an opinion on whether or not we want to continue in this direction. If we do, we should legitimize it by rewriting our bylaws, etc. At the September business meeting I proposed the lodge form a group to address this issue. Its purpose would be to decide if we really want to change. If so, the group would study alternatives and list them for the membership to vote on or to discuss further. If you would like to contribute to this effort and become a member of this study group, please let me know as soon as possible. More on this subject later.

A more pressing problem that is coming to a head is member participation. I feel the last nine months have seen some very interesting and enjoyable meetings. Attendance is up, the food has been delicious, and the cultural presentations and entertainment have been outstanding. We hope this trend will continue, but we will need your help. A small group of members has been working very

hard to put on these programs. They are beginning to get tired and are only one deep so if one of them misses a meeting something doesn't get done. Most of the jobs I'm talking about are simple: either coming to the meetings a little early to set things up or staying a little later to help clean up. For example, we need to have our new speaker system set up. For the last couple of meetings there was no one available to do this. It's a small thing but it can greatly affect the success or failure of a meeting. We will write up a list of jobs and have it available at future meetings. Please sign up for one of these jobs!

*In Truth and Unity
Art Niemoller*

In Memoriam

It was a chock to all of us when Eleanor Vine passed away on August 30. A long-time member, she was actively involved in all our activities until very recently, always ready to help out and take on various elective positions.

Roster Changes

Here are some address changes for your program book:

Arlie Veis
4350 Fair Oaks Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95864-5369

Larry and Jeana Hultquist
8836 Piedra Way
Fair Oaks, CA 95628-3912

Sharon Crossland
704 Cathedral Drive
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Sue Bergman
c/o Badgley
8342 La Riviera Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826-1655

A Reminder

Please let the lodge secretary know if you have changed your address. If you don't make timely address changes, you'll miss a newsletter or two and you might miss out on some enjoyable lodge activities. The post office does not forward our newsletters but returns them with an additional charge of 32¢ each.



The Swedish National Intoxicant: Aquavit

The history of distilling wine into spirits goes back 3,000 years to ancient China, although it was then used only in perfumes. Since the classical Greek period, it had been prescribed for ailments including the plague, ingrown toe nails, stomach cramp, gout, insomnia, toothache, and many others.

But Greeks, and soon many other people, learned they could drink it, too, and the party began. To the Romans, it was entitled "*aqua vitae*" meaning the water of life; the French named it "*eau-de-vie*" and others, including modern Swedes, interchangeably call it "burned wine" (*brännvin*) in reference to the original method of distilling the liquid from wine.

Potent potions, which today contain up to 43 percent alcohol (86 proof), earliest aquavits were typically mixtures of distilled (burned) wine, Rhone wine, red coral, and ivory. To improve the taste, cloud berries, roots, spices, and an assortment of herb extracts were later blended into the mixture. Today, a medley of flavorings distinguish the various types of aquavit brands, derived from the traditional recipes of past centuries.

Although modern Swedes may have the feeling that they are Vikings when drinking aquavit, it was unknown to their ancient ancestors and appeared first in the late fifteenth century and then only as a chemical for manufacturing gunpowder.

Records show that less than 30 years later, it was being used for recreational purposes.

Throughout society, it was soon a tradition with food, entertainment and, without sobering consequences, rapidly became an integral part of the common man's everyday habits. However, there were dangerous side effects with abuse of the substance: impurities could cause blindness or death.

Toward the end of the 1800s, an entrepreneur named Lars Olsson Smith perfected production of what he advertised as an "absolutely pure" aquavit—and thereby became the father of today's "Absolut" vodka.



— *Sweden Now*, Spring 1997

Plea from the Editor

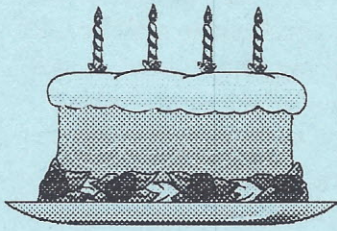
It saddens me that the postal service keeps returning the newsletter for Viola Hallen because of insufficient address (maybe wrong apartment number). I have not been able to reach Viola or her daughter by phone for an address correction. If anyone knows what is wrong with the following address, please let me know:

Fair Oaks Retirement Residence
8350 Fair Oaks Blvd, Apt 2
Carmichael, CA 95608-1901

Sweden Good for Business

According to American Chambers of Commerce, Sweden, together with Switzerland, Ireland, and Holland, offers the most favorable business climate in Europe. Sweden scores high in both political and economic areas. The chambers also give high marks to the government's attitude towards business and praise the quality of life, medical care, infrastructure, and work conditions.

— *Swedish Press*, June 1997



Happy Birthday!

10/01- June Delle
 10/03 - Lowell Carlson
 10/04 - Eva Allred
 10/05 - Karen Johnson
 10/06 - Dale Ingvarlsen
 10/08 - Barbara Lutz
 10/10 - Helen Dyckman
 10/11 - Keith Bergstrom
 10/15 - Astrid Broess
 10/16 - Juanita Skorheim
 10/17 - Kent Kjelstrom
 10/17 - Ruby Anderson
 10/20 - Ethel Hoffman
 10/21 - Carl Nelson
 10/24 - Marianne Ek
 10/27 - Vickie Lydecker
 10/29 - Gibson Kingren
 10/30 - John Anderson

Summer Cake

Our cultural leaders baked this Swedish cake for our last meeting and were overwhelmed with requests for the recipe:

1 cube margarine
 ½ cup sugar
 4 egg yolks
 5 tblsp milk
 ½ cup flour
 1 tblsp baking powder

Meringue

4 egg whites
 1 cup sugar
 ½ cup almond flakes
 (optional)

Filling

1¼ cup whipping cream
 strawberries (or strained,
 crushed pineapple + 2
 mashed bananas)

Line a jelly roll pan with foil and butter the foil well. Whip margarine and sugar, add the egg yolks one at a time, and continue whipping until the batter is light and fluffy. Add milk and then the flour mixed with baking powder. Put the batter on the foil and spread with a spatula.

Whip the egg whites to hard foam, add sugar, and continue beating until you can turn the bowl upside down. Spread the meringue over the cake batter and swirl it a little with the spatula for an attractive appearance. Almond flakes on top are optional.

Bake in 350° for about 30 minutes or until the meringue has a good color. Let cake cool for 5-10 minutes. Cut in half. Flip each section upside down and peel off the foil. Flip back, cover one layer with the whipping cream and the filling and put the other half on top. This cake can be made ahead of time and frozen. If so, leave the foil on (it comes off easily when the cake is frozen.)

NOTE

SOMEONE LEFT A CAKE CUTTER AT THE STOCKHAMS' HOUSE AT THE TIME OF THE ICE CREAM SOCIAL.



Deadline

for the November newsletter is Wednesday, October 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.

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, 451-3075

❑ Secretary Brian Stockham, 683-3078

❑ Vice Chairman Marianne Ek, 372-1015

❑ Chairman Arthur Niemoller, 631-9330

October Dues Anniversaries

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

Louise Amundsen

Robert Anderson

Jone Canady

Edward and Lucy Dahlberg

June Delle

David and Karin Dorey

LaVerne Gilbertson

Paul and LaVerne Gullans

Robert Johnson

Carol Kwolek

Barbara Mecci-Ericson

Jillian Stanley

Inger and Lennart Thornros

Dues are \$18 a year, payable to Monitor Lodge No. 218. You

may pay them at the October 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.



A Scandinavian Seminar

July 12-August 2 was an exciting time for Jeanette Kruse, Dorothy Scherer, and me (Myrtle Widmark) as we traveled with an ElderHostel group to Iceland, Sweden, and Finland.

Our first week was in Iceland at the Nordic Course Center in western Iceland, about 50 miles from Reykjavik. We learned about Iceland, the language, and the sagas. There were lots of tours, for instance, to the site of the first Alting (Parliament) from the year 930; Strokkur geyser, which erupts every 8-10 minutes; Reykholt, where saga author Snorri Sturluson lived; the hot spring which heats the houses in the nearby fishing town; and to Reykjavik.



We were shown how to spin the Icelandic wool, heard lectures and saw videos. Our meals were served family style, often with fresh Icelandic fish. One evening we were divided into groups and visited with families in the area, most of whom were farmers. The sheep were in the mountains during the summer and brought down into barns for the winter. We were also able to go to a swimming pool heated by geothermal water.

Our second week was spent in Sweden at the Wik Folk College on the northern shore of Lake Mälaren, 15 miles from Uppsala. The castle of Wik has a 500-year-old history. The college was founded in 1876 and is owned by the County Council of Uppsala. A folk dance group with fiddlers entertained and invited us to dance in a beautiful ball room on the upper floor. Our farewell dinner was held in the cellar, another interesting room!

We studied Swedish history from lectures and tours to see Runic stones, churches, and old villages. A botanist showed us the grounds which had numerous different trees and flowers. Another interesting morning was spent with two lady politicians, one a Member of Parliament and one experienced in the local government of Uppsala, answering our questions. We had an all-day field trip to Old Uppsala with the large burial mounds and Uppsala with its university, cathedral, and castle. Another trip went to the Valloon iron works in northern Uppland where iron had been mined for several hundred years.

Our last day was spent on a tour of Stockholm with lunch at Djurgården and time to see the Old Town. After visiting the Wasa ship museum, we boarded a ferry for an overnight trip to Finland.

Our last week was at a Christian college three miles from the city of Turku (Åbo). We studied Finnish history, art, and music with trips to museums, the art gallery, the cathedral, the castle, and to the Sibelius Museum. Sunday afternoon was spent at a seaside resort with return trip by water bus. We took an all-day trip to Helsinki with time to explore on our own. We lived in dormitory rooms with baths and meals were served buffet style with a variety of choices. And there were saunas to try out. At our farewell dinner we all took turns cooking our own pancakes using long-handled frying pans. We returned to Stockholm on 2 Aug.

— Myrtle Widmark

ElderHostels

Combining education with adventure, ElderHostel, based in Boston, offers residential education experiences for people over 55. It has programs at more than 2,000 colleges, universities, museums, national parks, environmental centers, and other institutions throughout the United States and Canada, including some on Scandinavian subject matters. (Myrtle Widmark and Dorothy Scherer can probably provide additional details.)

The fee for a one-week program in the United States is \$340, which includes lodging and meals. Lodging can be as simple as a university dorm or as elegant as a four-star hotel. ElderHostel also has one- to four-week programs in 49 countries, including the Scandinavian countries, with daily classes and course-related field trips. Many people hesitate to travel alone but in these programs, people are friendly and the atmosphere feels safe. It's perfect for people who like to learn new things and also have their food and accommodations taken care of. Some seniors chose ElderHostel locations that are close to relatives or in conjunction with other events happening in the area.

For a free catalog, write to ElderHostel, P.O. Box 1959, Wakefield, MA 01880-5959.

— From *Sacramento Spectrum*, 6/18/97



For more information about ElderHostels, see the Web site <http://www.elderhostel.org>

Great Opportunity

Here's your chance to get involved in something really enjoyable, interesting, and worthwhile: the 14th annual Scandinavian Festival here in Sacramento. The festival is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, 1998, and it's time to start preparing for it. The first planning meeting will be held on **Monday, November 10, at 7 PM**. As usual, we will be at the Norway Hall, 770 Darina Avenue.

HAVE A NICE AND FRIGHTFUL HALLOWEEN



Strange American Habits

The Internet is an invaluable source of important information. Your newsletter editor found answers to some of the questions Swedes frequently ask about the strange American eating and drinking habits.

Just how bad is the coffee in the USA? This is perhaps the most widely-held opinion about any single food in the United States: the coffee is undrinkable. It is simply too weak. There is nothing like the disgusted tone of a Swede as he describes a cup of coffee: "I could actually see the bottom of the cup!!!" [Sweden ranks second after Finland in coffee consumption per capita worldwide so, naturally, they are connoisseurs . . .]

Why do Americans drink coffee with their meals? This is curious behavior indeed. In many parts of the US, you will be offered a cup of coffee with your meal, which Swedes find bizarre. Swedes view coffee as a ritual to be carried out at specific times: as an after-dinner complement to a meal or as part of a conscious pause in the day [with, traditionally, seven kinds of cookies]. In either case, the consumption of coffee is clearly set apart from dining or any other activities. Many Americans, on the other hand, drink coffee like water (which it resembles) all day long, and drinking it at meals is no different from drinking it at their desk at work or in the car on the way to work.

What should I offer an American to drink? In a word: EVERYTHING. What an American loves most, more than any particular beverage, is CHOICE. The Swede will offer a carefully chosen and presented *välkomstdrink* to his guests as they arrive at his dinner party. Everyone will happily accept and enjoy this drink. Try offering the same thing to an American, and he will think you a cad for not offering a bar full of things to choose from: liquor, various mixes, wine, beer (both regular and lite) and soft drinks (including low-calorie and decaffeinated varieties). The more you have to choose from, the better host you are.

Why can't Americans walk/drive/sit around without a beverage in their hands? This is truly a puzzler. Americans have sort of a collective oral fixation and need to have a can or cup near their lips at all times, even when they are in motion. In recent years, there has been a trend towards beverage containers with tight caps designed specifically for that purpose. Particularly amusing are the liter-sized containers that have a big straw sticking out of the top that many American now carry with them almost everywhere.

What is the most important feature of an American automobile? The cup holders. A current television advertisement for a large family car vividly portrays about a dozen drink cups flying through the air and settling comfortably in the cup holders strategically placed around the interior of the vehicle.

Why so many dining choices? You can't just order a simple meal of, say, barbequed ribs. Your waiter will demand to know whether you want that with cole slaw or a baked potato. And do you want sour cream on that potato? A salad is included but you have to choose from about 14 different dressings. And what did you want to drink? A soda? Well, you'll have to decide whether a Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Diet Sprite, etc., etc. (Only an American orders 5,000 calories of food and tops it off with a diet beverage.)

How do Americans toast? Do not use the fine wine glasses from Orrefors if you invite Americans to dinner. Where Swedes are content to just lift their glasses a bit and nod to their dining companions during a toast, the Americans will want to reach over the table and clink glasses with everyone else. This gets more and more dangerous as the night wears on.

