

VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization



CONSTITUTION

ORGANIZED

New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., September 18, 1896

INCORPORATED

Under the laws of the state of Connecticut, March 29, 1899

VASA ORDER EMBLEM

The Vasa Order Emblem is composed of the following symbols:

- The letters **VO** for Vasa Order superimposed on a Maltese Cross.
- The **Maltese Cross**, superimposed on a Wreath, was used by the first known sick benefit organization during the Christian Era by the Knights of Saint John. The organization was instituted in the year 1099 for the care of the sick among the Pilgrims and Crusaders. Twenty years later, in the year 1119, the Knights Templar were organized for a similar purpose and their Banner had a Maltese Cross to symbolize “Knighthood” and “Templarism.”
- The **Wreath** reminds us to keep in sacred memory departed members, and to honor the many brave, noble and great achievements which have given Sweden and its people an honorable name throughout the world.
- The **Sheaf** signifies unity and was adopted by Gustav Eriksson Wasa in his Coat of Arms as a sign of uniting all the Swedish people during the early 1500s prior to his coronation as King Gustav Wasa.

The colors of the Vasa Order Emblem are as follows:

- The letters VO in gold.
- The Maltese Cross in blue with white outlines.
- The Wreath and Sheaf in gold.

C. W. Malmquist, one of the organizers of the Vasa Order of America and its third grand master, designed all Charters and Emblems, which were approved and adopted during the second meeting of the grand Lodge in 1899.

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INCORPORATION

of the Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of America

Resolved by this assembly:

Section 1. That Nils Pearson, Louis Anderson of New Britain, George K. Rose, Thure S. Lilja of New Haven, Andrew Williams of Hartford, Charles W. Malmquist of Wallingford and all such other persons as are now or may from time to time be associated with them, be and they are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate by the name of The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America, to have its principal office in New Britain in this state, and by that name shall have perpetual succession and shall have all the powers granted to corporations by the general laws of this state.

Section 2. The objects and purposes of said corporation shall be to render aid and assistance to sick members of the corporation, whether such sickness be temporary or incurable, and to render pecuniary aid toward defraying the funeral expenses of members, and to promote social and intellectual intercourse among its members.

Section 3. Said corporation, for the purpose of more effectively rendering pecuniary aid and assistance to its members, may establish, accumulate, and maintain a reserve or other fund, in such manner and to such amount as it may determine.

Section 4. Said corporation may locate and establish subordinate district and local lodges, or other branches or divisions thereof, composed of members of said order, in any town or city in this or any other state of the United States, and said district and local lodges, or other branches or divisions, when so established shall be governed and managed by such laws, bylaws, rules, and regulations as said corporation shall determine; and said corporation may enforce such laws, bylaws, rules, and regulations against said district and local lodges, divisions, or branches, in any court of this state, or of any other state of the United States; said corporation may authorize district and local lodges to make such local bylaws as the peculiar needs of any district or local lodge, branch or division, may seem to require, to be subject to the approval of the corporation.

Section 5. Said corporation shall continue to be governed, managed, and controlled by the constitution, bylaws, rules and regulations previously adopted and now in force, until the same are legally changed, altered, amended or repealed.

Section 6. All funds and other property now belonging to the voluntary association known as The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America, are by this act made the funds and property of this corporation, subject to its constitution, bylaws, laws, rules, and regulations.

Approved, March 29, 1899
State of Connecticut, Office of the Secretary

I, Huber Clark, Secretary of the State of Connecticut and keeper of the seal thereof, and of the original record of the Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of said state, DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that I have compared the annexed copy of the Resolution Incorporating The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America with the original record of the same now remaining in this office, and have found the said copy to be a correct and complete transcript thereof.

AND I FURTHER CERTIFY, that the said original record is a public record of said State of Connecticut, now remaining in this office.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of said State, at Hartford, this twenty-ninth day of March, 1899.

(seal) (signed) HUBER CLARK
Secretary

INCORPORATION

An Act amending the Charter of the Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section four of a resolution incorporating The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America, is hereby amended to read as follows: Said corporation may locate and establish subordinate district and local lodges, or other branches or divisions thereof, composed of members of said order, in any town or city in this or any other state of the United States and in any territory of the United States or land or country under the control of the United States and in Canada and in Sweden, and said district and local lodges, or other branches or divisions, when so established, shall be governed and managed by such laws, bylaws, rules, and regulations as said corporation shall determine; and said corporation may enforce such laws, bylaws, rules, and regulations against said district and local lodges, divisions, or branches, in any court of this state, or of any territory of the United States or land or country under the control of the United States and in Canada and in Sweden. Said corporation may authorize district and local lodges to make such local bylaws as the peculiar needs of any district or local lodge, branch or division may seem to require, such bylaws to be subject to the approval of the corporation.

Section 2. This act shall take effect from its passage, but shall not become operative unless within six months after the passage hereof the amendment herein to the charter of The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America, shall be accepted at a meeting of said lodge, warned and held for that purpose, nor unless within said period an attested copy of such acceptance shall be filed in the office of the secretary of the state.

Approved, March 13, 1913
State of Connecticut, Office of the Secretary

I, Albert Phillips, Secretary of the State of Connecticut and keeper of the seal thereof, and of the original record of the Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of said State, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that I have compared the annexed copy of AN ACT AMENDING THE CHARTER OF THE GRAND LODGE, VASA ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA with the original record of the same now remaining in this office, and have found said copy to be a correct and complete transcript thereof.

AND I FURTHER CERTIFY that the said original record is a public record of the said state of Connecticut, now remaining in this office.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of said State, at Hartford, this thirteenth day of March, 1913.

(seal) (signed) ALBERT PHILLIPS
Secretary

An Act changing name from The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America to The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of America.

Hon. CARL FOSTER, Judge
No. 51253
Superior Court, Hartford County
May Thirty-first, 1935

Complains of the Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America, a corporation having its office and place of business in New Britain, for Change of Name.

INCORPORATION

JUDGMENT

This application, dated April 30, 1935, praying for a change of name, came to this court on May 2, 1935, and thence to the present time, when application appeared and was fully heard thereon, no one appearing in opposition thereto.

The Court having heard the applicant finds the allegations of said applicant to be proved and true and that the applicant is entitled to the relief prayed for.

Whereupon it is adjudged that the name of the applicant be and it is changed from the Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of the United States of America to THE GRAND LODGE, VASA ORDER OF AMERICA, by which name it shall hereafter be known and called, with all the rights and privileges heretofore pertaining to it under aforesaid name, and subject to all the duties and obligations resting upon it under said former name.

By the Court,
(signed) RAYMOND G. CALNEN
Assistant Clerk
State of Connecticut, ss.
Hartford County

I, Lucius P. Fuller, Clerk of the Superior Court of said State, within and for said County, HEREBY CERTIFY the foregoing to be a true copy of record.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of said Superior Court, at Hartford, in said County, this 6th day of June, A.D. 1935.

(seal) (signed) LUCIUS P. FULLER
Clerk

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

ARTICLE 1 – NAME

This organization shall be known as the **Vasa Order of America**, a Swedish-American Fraternal Organization.

ARTICLE II – DIVISION

The Vasa Order of America shall be governed by the Grand Lodge with subordinate district and local lodges, youth and children's clubs, Vasa activities clubs and branches or divisions as deemed appropriate.

ARTICLE III – AIM

The Vasa Order of America shall endeavor to recruit persons of good moral character, born in Nordic countries, namely Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland or Iceland, or who are of Nordic ancestry, their spouses and non-Nordic widows or widowers, or who are committed to the promotion and advancement of Swedish and Nordic heritage and culture.

ARTICLE IV – OBJECTIVES *Rev. July 2010*

1. To perpetuate the noble heritage of our forefathers and to foster Nordic cultural activities by encouragement and example to its members.
2. With our motto – **GENEROSITY, TRUTH and UNITY** as a foundation, endeavor to perpetuate the moral and social standards of its members in order to strengthen the high ideals and reputation of its people.
3. To interest and assist the younger generations in the aims and purposes of the Order by supporting the institution and progress of children and youth clubs within the Order.
4. To create and maintain funds for financial relief to its members in need of such assistance.
5. To create and maintain funds for financial assistance to its members who actively engage in the pursuit of higher education.
6. To create and maintain funds for financial assistance to a worthwhile cause for the betterment of human life and existence.
7. That the Grand Lodge encourage and support the activities of local and district lodges in regional community cultural and charitable activities.

ARTICLE V – DISTRICT LODGES

Institution - Division - Merger - Dissolution

Section 1 - Institution. A minimum of four Local Lodges in the same geographical area, with an aggregate total of two hundred or more members, may petition the Grand Lodge for a district charter.

- A. The petition shall, in writing, clearly designate the state or territory desired for jurisdiction, be signed by each local lodge Chairman and Recording Secretary, and bear the official seal of each local lodge.
- B. When jurisdiction over the petitioned territory conflicts with that of an established district lodge, agreement must be reached with the Grand Lodge as to jurisdiction.
- C. The Grand Lodge or its Executive Board shall grant the district charter and request the Grand Master, together with the Grand Secretary, to issue an official district charter.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

- D. The Grand Master shall appoint the first Past District Master, who shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of a formally elected District Master having served a full term.
- E. The Grand Master shall arrange the time and place of institution, approved by the elected District Master and the district executive board.

Section 2 - Division. A district lodge shall petition the Grand Lodge for division in order to institute a new district lodge.

- A. When it is in the best interest of the Vasa Order.
- B. Provided each local lodge under its jurisdiction votes on proposed petition and two-thirds of votes cast favor the division.
- C. Provided all property is divided on a per capita basis, however, only members of an existing funeral benefit fund are to be considered for division of such fund assets.

The Grand Lodge, or its Executive Board, may grant such division and request the Grand Master and Grand Secretary to issue an official district charter for the new district lodge.

The Grand Master shall arrange the time and place of institution, approved by the elected District Master and the District Executive Board.

Section 3 - Merger. District lodges wishing to merge, must submit a petition to the Grand Lodge, or its Executive Board, requesting a merger, provided:

- A. It is in the best interest of the Vasa Order.
- B. Each local lodge under the jurisdiction of the districts in question, votes on the proposed petition and two-thirds of votes cast are in favor.
- C. An agreement has been reached as to the name and number of the district lodge which shall continue to function.
- D. All property and funds are merged and become assets of the active district lodge.
- E. Only members of existing funeral benefit funds shall be participants in such fund in the active district lodge.

The Grand Lodge or its Executive Board shall grant the petition for merger and request the return of the retired district charter(s) and seal(s).

Section 4 - Dissolution. A district lodge shall notify the Grand Lodge or its Executive Board in writing of its desire to dissolve, provided:

- A. It is in the best interest of the Vasa Order.
- B. The District Master, District Secretary, Chairman and Recording Secretary of each local lodge within the district properly sign the letter requesting dissolution.
- C. The total membership in the district lodge is less than two hundred and local lodges number two or less.
- D. All members of record had been notified by mail and two-thirds of votes cast favor a resolution to dissolve.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

- E. The resolution to dissolve states the reason(s) for requesting dissolution and manner of disposition of district assets.
- F. The retired District Lodge charter, record books and three gold seal imprints shall be forwarded to the V.O.A. National Archives. A properly signed letter stating dissolution date and bearing the District Lodge seal shall be forwarded to the Grand Secretary.

In the event that the remaining local lodges desire to operate as regional lodges, all the assets of the dissolving district lodge are transferred to the Grand Lodge prior to dissolution. The existing funeral benefit fund assets must be used by the Grand Lodge to pay the established funeral benefit until transferred assets are exhausted and the fund terminated.

ARTICLE VI – LOCAL LODGES Institutions - Division - Merger - Dissolution

Section 1 - Institution. A minimum of fifteen people in any locality within the jurisdiction of the Order may petition for a local lodge charter by:

- A. Contacting the District Master of the district lodge having jurisdiction over the locality of the proposed local lodge.

The District Master shall appoint one of the charter members to serve as the first Past Chairman, who shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of a formally elected Chairman having served a full term of office.

The district lodge, or its executive board, shall, in conjunction with the newly elected officers, arrange for a time and place for the institution of the new local lodge.

OR

- B. Contacting the Grand Master in case the locality of the proposed local lodge is under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Master shall make arrangements for the institution of the new local lodge and appoint the first Past Chairman, who shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of a formally elected Chairman having served a full term.

The Grand Lodge will allow up to two hundred dollars of reimbursable expenses to the organizer(s) of the new local lodge.

Section 2 - Division. A local lodge shall petition the District Master of the district lodge having jurisdiction, for division:

- A. When membership in the local lodge to be divided is in excess of three hundred in good standing.
- B. When it is in the best interest of the Vasa Order and fifteen or more members wish to organize and join a new local lodge.
- C. Provided all members affected by the division had been notified at least thirty days prior to the voting on the proposed petition for division and majority of votes cast were in favor.

All properties and funds must be divided on a per capita basis, and members joining the new local lodge retain all rights and privileges earned.

The district lodge or its executive board arranges for a suitable time and place of institution of the new local lodge (Section 1 - above).

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

Section 3 - Merger. One or more local lodges may be merged when it is in the best interest of the Order, and:

- A. A local lodge accepts members in good standing and all property and funds from one or more local lodges willing to surrender their charter(s) to the district lodge having jurisdiction.

OR

- B. Two or more local lodges wish to combine to form a new local lodge in which case:
 - 1. All members of affected lodges must be notified at least thirty days prior to voting on the proposed merger and two-thirds of votes cast favor the proposal.
 - 2. All the local lodge charter(s) and seal(s) are surrendered.
 - 3. A new local lodge charter is issued and charter members of the merged lodges, including deceased charter members, are listed on the new charter in the order they appeared on the surrendered charters, followed by the remaining members of the new local lodge.
 - 4. Numbering of members in the new local lodge shall be according to the length of membership in the Vasa Order.

All members affected by a merger shall retain all rights and privileges earned – to be noted in the new lodge records.

Proposal for merger is submitted to the district lodge executive board for formal approval after lodges have fulfilled the above requirements.

Three gold imprints of the local lodge shall be forwarded to the V.O.A. National Archives. Properly signed letters stating dissolution dates and bearing the local lodge seals shall be forwarded to the Grand Secretary. Record books of the retiring lodge(s) become the property of the new and accepting lodge, and are made part of their official record. The retired local lodge charter(s) will be forwarded to the V.O.A. National Archives unless a District Archives exists, in which case the district may retain the retired charter within the District Archives.

Section 4 - Dissolution. A local lodge shall notify the district lodge, or its executive board, in writing, requesting dissolution:

- A. When it is in the best interest of the Vasa Order.
- B. Provided that all members had been notified at least thirty days prior to voting on the proposed dissolution, and less than seven members in good standing were opposed.
 - 1. All property, funds and record book(s) of the local lodge become the property of the district lodge having jurisdiction. Three gold imprints of the local lodge seal shall be forwarded to the V.O.A. National Archives. A properly signed letter stating the dissolution date and bearing the local lodge seal shall be forwarded to the Grand Secretary. The retired local lodge charter will be forwarded to the V.O.A. National Archives unless a District Archives exists, in which case the district may retain the retired charter within the District Archives.
 - 2. The district lodge shall make sick benefit and funeral benefit payments for participating members who maintain their good standing by paying dues and assessments directly to the district lodge.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

3. Members of a dissolved Local Lodge with no district affiliation, a lodge considered “under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge”, may continue their membership in the Vasa Order and maintain their good standing by paying dues and assessments directly to the Grand Lodge.

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ARTICLE VII – PUBLICITY

Section 1. The Vasa Order Emblem may not be used on any manufactured items without the consent of the Grand Lodge or its Executive Board.

Section 2. The words “Sweden” or “Swedish” shall be used whenever possible in publicity copy.

Section 3. The first heading noticed by members when reading letterheads, communications, etc., shall be **Vasa Order of America (A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization)**.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

These Articles of Agreement may be amended only at the Grand Lodge in session as provided for in the Grand Lodge Constitution, Article XVII.

GENERAL RULES

GENERAL RULES OF THE ORDER Grand Lodge - District Lodge - Local Lodge

1. **General Rules of the Order** as issued by the Grand Lodge shall be followed during all Vasa meetings. **Roberts Rules of Order**, newly revised, shall be used when questions arise which are not covered by General Rules of the Order.
2. Whenever there is a conflict between members as to the constitutionality of any decision or action, the following procedures shall be observed:

Interpretation or explanation shall be requested, in writing, from the District Deputy, the District Master, the Grand Master or the Grand Lodge, with copies to whomever may be affected by the final decision.
3. Lodges in Sweden may use **Swedish Parliamentary Rules**, provided there are no conflicts with the Constitution of the Vasa Order of America.
4. All regalia, emblems and other materials used by individual members in connection with lodge work, shall conform to the rules and regulations of the Grand Lodge.
5. The use of emblems, or any other signs of the Vasa Order, on business cards or in connection with advertisement used for personal gain, is strictly forbidden. Any violation subjects the member to expulsion from the Order. Cards may be exchanged between members for non-commercial purposes.
6. The use of regalia in public, either by a lodge or an individual member is strictly forbidden, except during a lodge funeral or memorial service.
7. Intoxicating beverages shall under no circumstances be served or be available in the meeting room during a business meeting.
8. Political or religious questions are not to be discussed during business meetings, unless directly connected with lodge work and activities.
9. The official Vasa Order of America Membership Card shall serve as proof of good standing in the Vasa Order of America.
10. A memorial service is recommended to be scheduled to honor deceased members.
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11. The meeting nearest September 18 shall be observed as a day for local or group initiation of new members.
12. It shall be the responsibility of each member to notify the proper authorities of a change in address (showing new as well as old address).
13. All local lodge appeals for aid and assistance in order to strengthen its financial standing, or for any other reason, must be channeled through the district lodge or its executive board for sanction.
14. Funds or accounts established at the local lodge level for purposes other than paying sick benefit may be used in any way its bylaws prescribe or its membership deems appropriate in furthering lodge prestige in the community.

GENERAL RULES

15. A lodge or society, not part of the Vasa Order, seeking admittance as a whole and expressing a desire to become part of the Vasa Order, either as a new lodge or by admittance of its members as a body into an already established lodge of the Vasa Order, can be accepted, provided members seeking admittance are eligible for membership in the Order.
16. At the meetings of the Grand, district and local lodges, the prescribed ritual shall be used.
17. Any Vasa member who hinders the operation of the Vasa Order or dishonors the good reputation of the Vasa Order of America, or any of its members or violates stipulations of the Constitution, may be subject to expulsion from the Order.
18. The name, Swedish American Order of Vasa, may be used in telephone listings and at public events to emphasize our Swedish heritage.
19. All lodge stationery and business cards should contain “www.vasaorder.com” or “visit us at www.vasaorder.com.”
20. That the Grand Lodge Executive Board immediately after the Grand Lodge Convention give priority to revise the new wording of the Constitution, on account of decisions at the Grand Lodge Convention. The Grand Lodge must distribute the changes of the Constitution no later than a half a year after the Convention.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this governing body of the Vasa Order of America shall be the **Grand Lodge**.

ARTICLE II – JURISDICTION

The Grand Lodge shall have jurisdiction in the United States of America, any territory, land or country under the control of the U.S.A., in Canada and in Sweden, over all district and local lodges, branches or divisions of the Order.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Classification. The Grand Lodge shall have four classes of membership, namely:

1. **Active Member.** The active membership is composed of elected officers, honorary life members, and duly elected delegates from district and regional lodges.
2. **Passive Member.** All members who have served the Grand Lodge as active members shall be passive members with the right to speak at subsequent meetings of the Grand Lodge, however, shall have no right to vote nor to claim any compensation in connection with such attendance. **Past Grand Lodge Officers** will be entitled to voice and vote but may not claim any compensation in connection with such attendance.

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3. **Honorary Life Member.** Proposal for honorary life membership shall be made by the Grand Lodge or its Executive Board, and must contain complete information as to qualifications of the candidate.
 - A. Candidate must be an active or passive member of the Grand Lodge.
 - B. Honorary Life Membership is automatically bestowed on the retiring Grand Master.
 - C. Honorary Life Membership, in other cases, must be by a majority vote of the Grand Lodge in session.
 - D. Honorary Life Member is entitled to attend the Grand Lodge conventions during member's lifetime with the same privileges and financial reimbursement as an elected delegate.
4. **Honorary Member.** A proposal for honorary membership shall be made by the Grand Lodge or its Executive Board.
 - A. Candidate must be a non-member of the Vasa Order and worthy of special recognition for personal contributions in the support of the Vasa Order.
 - B. Honorary membership is bestowed by a majority vote of the Grand Lodge in session or by G. L. Executive Board decision.
 - C. Recipient shall be awarded a special citation or appropriate scroll.
 - D. Honorary membership does not entitle recipient to attend conventions or to claim any special privileges.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

Section 1 - Regular. The Grand Lodge shall conduct a regular meeting every fourth year in the month of June or July on date and place previously decided by the Grand Lodge in session or its Executive Board.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

- A. The official call to the convention shall be issued and mailed by the Grand Secretary to all active members of the Grand Lodge and all district, local and regional lodges.
- B. The G.L. Cultural Directors, the G. L. Historian, the G.L. Youth Directors and the Editor of **The Vasa Star** shall be invited to attend the convention to submit written reports and recommendations for the future.

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Section 2 - Special. A special meeting may be called by the Grand Master, in conjunction with the Executive Board, which shall instruct the Grand Secretary to issue and mail the call:

- A. At least thirty days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- B. To all active members of the Grand Lodge, stating nature of business to be presented for deliberation and action.

Section 3 - Quorum. Twenty-five active members of the Grand Lodge shall constitute a quorum necessary to transact any business during a meeting of the Grand Lodge.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1 - Elected and Appointed Officers. The Grand Lodge shall have the following officers:

A. Elected Officers.

- * Grand Master
- * Vice Grand Master
- * Grand Secretary
- * Grand Treasurer
- * Vice Grand Secretary
- * Five members of the Executive Board

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The office of Past Grand Master shall be filled by the outgoing Grand Master.

B. Appointed Officers. The presiding Grand Master shall appoint a:

- * Grand Chaplin
- * Grand Master of Ceremonies
- * Grand Assistant Master of Ceremonies
- * Grand Inner Guard
- * Grand Outer Guard

to serve during the Grand Lodge meeting.

Appointed officers shall be appointed and notified of the appointment at least twenty days prior to the opening of the Grand Lodge meeting.

Section 2 - Qualifications. A candidate for an elective office must be an active member of the Grand Lodge.

- A. A candidate for election to Grand Master must have served the Grand Lodge as an elected officer for a four year term.
- B. A candidate for Member of the Executive Board for a designated region must be a member of a lodge in that geographical region according to Section 7.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

Section 3 - Term of Office. Officers shall be elected for a term of four years.

- A. The Grand Master shall be limited to any unfinished term by succession and two elected terms.
- B. The five elected Members of the Executive Board shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.
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Section 4 - Election of Officers. Each office shall be voted on separately - by secret ballot - and a majority of votes cast shall be required for election.

- A. Any proposed change in salaries shall be decided upon prior to election, otherwise, salaries remain as before.
- B. Whenever more than two candidates are nominated for election to the same office, and none receives a majority vote, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes is eliminated until one nominee receives a majority vote.
- C. Should there be only one nominee for an office, the presiding officer shall - after calling for further nominations three times - close nominations and declare nominee elected.

Section 5 - Vacancy in Office. A vacancy in the office of Grand Master or Grand Secretary shall be filled by the Vice Grand Master and the Vice Grand Secretary respectively. Any vacancy thus created or any other vacancy, including members of standing committees, shall be filled by appointment by the Grand Master, approved by the G.L. Executive Board.

A vacancy in the office of Past Grand Master shall be filled by the Past Grand Master in succession.

Section 6 - Duties of Officers.

- A. **The Grand Master** is the highest ranking officer in the Vasa Order of America and shall:
 - 1. Preside over all meetings of the Grand Lodge and its Executive Board.
 - 2. Have general supervision over all activities within the Order.
 - 3. Actively initiate and guide development and progress of the Order.
 - 4. Appoint a Grand Lodge Deputy for each district and region in accordance with the Grand Lodge Constitution – ART. X.
 - 5. Appoint a G.L. Cultural Director for USA/Canada, a G.L. Cultural Director for Sweden, three G.L. Regional Directors as assistants (for Audio-Visuals, Activities, Language), a G.L. Youth Director for USA/Canada, a G.L. Youth Director for Sweden and a G.L. Historian for USA/Canada, and a G.L. Historian for Sweden.
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 - 6. Appoint officers and special committees, subject to approval of the G.L. Executive Board.
 - 7. Issue new official district lodge charter in conjunction with the Grand Secretary.
 - 8. Issue new official local lodge charters in conjunction with the Grand Secretary.
 - 9. Inform Vasa members on matters of importance through **The Vasa Star**, the official publication of the Vasa Order.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

10. Endorse all vouchers, properly executed by the Grand Secretary, and forward to the Grand Treasurer for issuance of checks in compliance with vouchers.
 11. Promptly countersign and disburse all checks received from the Grand Treasurer for proper distribution.
 12. Dismiss or remove, in conjunction with the G.L. Executive Board, any officer(s) or committee member(s) of the Grand Lodge who neglect or refuse to attend to their respective duties.
 13. Be responsible for the Grand Lodge Banner.
 14. Issue a local lodge password in the month of December in the year he/she is elected and that password to remain in effect for four years.
 15. Present a complete printed report at the regular meeting of the Grand Lodge, covering the progress and standing of the Order during term of office, including recommendations for future growth and development.
 16. Turn over to successor or committee designated by the G.L. Executive Board, any and all property of the Order in the possession of the Grand Master.
- B. The Vice Grand Master** shall aid and assist the Grand Master and assume the duties of the Grand Master in his/her absence.
- C. The Grand Secretary** is the recording/corresponding secretary of the Grand Lodge, and shall:
1. Keep and maintain careful and impartial records of all meetings of the Grand Lodge and its Executive Board.
 2. Keep accurate accounts of all monies received for the Grand Lodge and monthly turn over all monies, in return for an official receipt, to the Grand Treasurer.
 3. Tabulate and keep accessible various reports from all district, local and regional lodges.
 4. Mail a sufficient number of term report blanks to District Secretaries for distribution of two blanks to each local and regional lodge.
 5. Be the custodian of the official Seal of the Grand Lodge for the exclusive use of the Grand Secretary.
 6. Be the custodian of materials and supplies used by the Order and fill requisitions for such from various sources.
 7. Issue and mail a call for regular and special meetings of the Grand Lodge and its Executive Board.
 8. Publish and distribute printed records of proceedings of the Grand Lodge meetings promptly after the close of the meeting.
 9. Publish and distribute a complete, accurate copy of all proposals to be acted upon at the Grand Lodge meeting to all lodges and active members of the Grand Lodge, at least sixty days prior to the opening of the meeting. A sufficient number of copies shall be made available to committee members of assigned proposals.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

10. Regularly publish activities of the Order that might be of interest to Vasa members, together with a condensed report of actions taken during G.L. Executive Board meetings in **The Vasa Star** within two months of the close of the meeting.
11. Publish all changes, in duplicate, that affect the Constitution of the Vasa Order and distribute to all district, local and regional lodges after the Grand Lodge meeting.
12. Issue vouchers for all justified records for payment and forward same to the Grand Master for signature.
13. Publish a complete record of proceedings of the G.L. Executive Board and mail to all the active members of the Grand Lodge at least thirty days prior to convention.
14. Automatically be covered by maximum allowable benefit of the G.L. Reimbursement Fund.
15. Submit a complete printed report at the meeting of the Grand Lodge concerning all activities of the office and publish a similar report in **The Vasa Star** at the end of each year, with copies to all district, local and regional lodges.
16. Turn over to successor or committee designated by the G.L. Executive Board, all property of the Order in the Grand Secretary's keeping and care.
17. Maintain a file of individual gold seal impressions of all the district lodge seals within the Order and all local lodges under direct Grand Lodge jurisdiction.

D. **The Grand Treasurer** shall:

1. Receive and deposit all monies forwarded by the Grand Secretary in the properly designated accounts.
2. Manage and accurately account for funds in conformity with rules and decisions of the Grand Lodge or its Executive Board, except special funds designated to be managed by others.
3. Issue checks to properly executed vouchers and mail to the Grand Master for signature and disbursement.
4. Publish a complete financial statement of all funds contemporaneously with the Grand Secretary's Annual Report in **The Vasa Star**, showing all activity during the prior year.
5. Assist the Committee on Finance in preparing a budget for estimated receipts and expenses for the ensuing term.
6. Automatically be covered by maximum allowable benefit of the G.L. Reimbursement Fund.
7. Turn over to successor or committee designated by the G.L. Executive Board, all property of the Order in Grand Treasurer's keeping and care.

E. **The Vice Grand Secretary** shall assist the Grand Secretary at all meetings of the Grand Lodge and its Executive Board and assume all duties of the Grand Secretary in his/her absence.

F. **The appointed** Grand Chaplain, Grand Master of Ceremonies, Grand Assistant Master of Ceremonies, Grand Inner Guard and Grand Outer Guard shall perform duties as outlined in the Ritual of the Order during the Grand Lodge meeting only.

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G. **The Grand Historian** shall:

1. Under the guidance and with the assistance of the Grand Lodge, record the written history of the Vasa Order of America, and obtain relevant photos identifying persons, places and dates.
2. Gather information from minutes and reports of the Grand Lodge as well as reports that should come from the District Lodge Historians.
3. Present a written report to the G.L. Convention.
4. At the end of the term of office turn over all records and information to successor.

Section 7 - Composition of the Executive Board. The following officers shall serve on the Executive Board:

- * Grand Master
- * Vice Grand Master
- * Grand Secretary
- * Grand Treasurer
- * Vice Grand Secretary
- * Five members of the Executive Board

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The Grand Master shall serve as chairman and the Grand Secretary as recording secretary.

The five members of the G.L. Executive Board each represent a geographic region of the USA, Canada and Sweden.

1. **Eastern Region** representing district lodges 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and the Southeastern and Florida Regions.
2. **Midwest Region** representing district lodges 7, 8, 9, 10, 17 and the Central Region.
3. **Western Region** representing district lodges 11, 12, 13, 15 and 21.
4. **Sweden** representing district lodges 19 and 20.
5. **Canada** representing district lodge 18.

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Should there not be any qualified candidate desiring to run for any individual seat representing the 5 designated Board Regions, that seat will be filled by electing an At-Large Member for that term only.

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The Grand Master shall appoint a member of the Executive Board to represent each of the local lodges with no District affiliation (under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge.)

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The Grand Master, Vice Grand Master, Grand Secretary, Grand Treasurer, and Vice Grand Secretary do not represent any special district(s).

Section 8 - Duties of the Executive Board. The G.L. Executive Board shall manage the affairs and have general supervision of all business pertaining to the Grand Lodge in the interim between regular meetings of the Grand Lodge, and must:

- A. Arrange for all income to be deposited in National Banks or Trust companies, which must be members of the Federal Reserve System of the U.S.A., and shall take due care to invest regular and special funds in securities considered legal investments for Savings Banks and Custodians of Trust Fund. Investment of Vasa Funds must be approved by two-thirds vote by the Executive Board.

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B. Designate a C.P.A. for audit, review, or compilation of all accounts of the Grand Lodge.

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C. Make certain that maturity dates of all investments are limited to 30 years maximum maturity date from the date of purchase.

D. Deposit, transfer or exchange monies or property of the Grand Lodge.

E. Exempt certain stipulations of the Constitution for the district lodges in Sweden, when it is deemed necessary.

F. Annually sponsor advertising of the Order in Swedish oriented periodicals and other advertising media in order to reach persons of Nordic birth or ancestry. Expenditures for this purpose must exceed one percent (1%) of the total per capita tax received.

G. The Grand Lodge Executive Board, Operations Committee, shall prepare and present a proposed budget to the Finance Committee Chairman, and Committee members to consider for the upcoming 4 year term. *Rev. July 2010*

Section 9 – The Grand Lodge Executive Board will be organized into three functional committees: 1) Operations, 2) Membership Development and 3) New Member Outreach.

The Operations Committee, consisting of the five Grand Officers: Grand Master, Vice Grand Master, Grand Secretary, Grand Treasurer and Vice Grand Secretary will be responsible for the ongoing business of the Vasa Order of America. This includes work related to the Archives, Jewelry, Scholarship, Vasa Star and Finance.

The Membership Development Committee, comprised of three Executive Board members, assigned by the Grand Master, will focus on the Constitution and Ritual content as well as programs for existing membership such as providing resource materials and assistance in job and Ritual training.

The New Member Outreach Committee will focus on developing resource materials and people for publicity of the Vasa Order of America, as well as Resource Tools for attracting new members. The Grand Master will appoint three Board Members to this committee.

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Section 10 - Acquisition of G.L. property by any and all officers of the Grand Lodge shall be prohibited.

ARTICLE VI – CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Grand Lodge shall have the following convention committees, and others as deemed necessary, appointed by the Grand Master.

Committee on:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| * Finance | * Culture |
| * Constitution | * Membership |
| * Appeals | * Scholarships |
| * Credentials | * Vasa Star |
| * Rituals | * Vasa Archives |

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Each committee shall be composed of three or more elected delegates to the G.L. Convention.

Committees shall be appointed by the Grand Master and appointed members notified not later than twenty days prior to the opening of the G.L. Convention.

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Convention committees shall convene at the call of the appointed chairman.

Section 2 - Duties of Convention Committees.

A. **Committee on Financial** shall:

1. Examine and report on all bills presented during the G.L. Convention, including all vouchers for travel and expenses of active members of the Grand Lodge.
2. Prepare and present a budget of estimated receipts and expenses for the ensuing term.
3. Receive and examine reports from auditors of books and accounts of the Grand Lodge, and make a detailed and comprehensive report on findings to the Grand Lodge in session.

B. **Committee on Constitution** shall:

1. Receive and examine all proposals for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Vasa Order of America.
2. Report on the constitutionality of proposals and lay before the Grand Lodge in session with recommendation(s) for action.
3. Make a detailed and comprehensive study of proposals before recommending action to be taken by the Grand Lodge in session.

C. **Committee on Appeals** shall consider all appeals, duly presented, and lay before the Grand Lodge with a decision and recommendation(s) for action.

D. **Committee on Credentials** shall:

1. Examine credentials of duly elected officers and delegates to the G.L. Convention.
2. Compile a complete list of delegates, listing:
 - a) Name of delegate
 - b) Name of district lodge or the region represented
 - c) Total number of delegates

and report to the Grand Lodge in session.

E. **Committee on Rituals** shall report on assignment(s) received from the Grand Master.

F. **Committee on Culture** shall report on assignment(s) received from the Grand Master.

G. **Committee on Membership** shall report on assignments received from the Grand Master and prepare a budgeted forecast of membership for the next four year term for the Finance Committee to use in setting the Per Capita Tax.

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H. **Committee on Scholarships** shall report on assignment(s) received from the Grand Master and results of scholarship contests during the term.

I. **Committee on The Vasa Star** shall report on matters pertaining to the publication as well as other assignment(s) received.

J. **Committee on the Vasa Order of America National Archives** shall report on the general progress and condition of the Archives in Bishop Hill.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

Section 3 - Standing Committees. The Grand Master shall appoint Members of the Executive Board to serve on these committees during their term of office.

ARTICLE VII – DELEGATES

Section 1 - Number of Delegates.

- A. District Lodges are entitled to representation at the Grand Lodge Convention as follows:
- Up to 1,000 members – One Delegate
 - 1,001 members – Two Delegates
- then one additional delegate for each additional one thousand local lodge members under the district lodge jurisdiction.
- B. Membership calculations must be based on the official January Membership Report of the year the convention convenes.
- C. Regional representation from regions established for lodges in states not part of a district lodge.
1. Florida Region - all local lodges within the state of Florida.
 2. Southeastern Region - all local lodges within the states of: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama.
 3. Central Region - all local lodges within the states of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and New Mexico.
- D. A Region having at least two lodges or two hundred fifty members is entitled to representation at the Grand Lodge convention as follows:
- * Up to 1,000 members – One Delegate
 - * 1,001 members – Two Delegates
- then one additional delegate for each additional one thousand members in their region
- E. Once the basic requirement for a district lodge is met in one state or any region, a district lodge may be formed for that state or region. Eligibility for representation at the Grand Lodge Convention shall not be forfeited by those local lodges if a district lodge is not formed.
- F. District lodges may be formed, at the option of the local lodges involved, by including local lodges in two or more geographically adjacent states.
- G. Election of Grand Lodge Delegates from Regions:
1. The Grand Secretary shall, on or before September 1st in the year preceding the Grand Lodge Convention, send a request to each local lodge within a Region requesting nominations of one or more candidates within that Region for election as Grand Lodge Delegate. Nominations should be mailed prior to November 1st. The Grand Secretary compiles a list of all regional nominees and sends this list to each local lodge within the Region with the request that each local lodge ballot on nominees at the election of officers at the November meeting. The result of the balloting shall be mailed to the Grand Secretary immediately following the election but no later than December 31st. Ballot results postmarked after the first of January cannot be considered.
 2. The Grand Secretary tabulates the results and the Grand Master declares the person(s) with the highest number of votes in each Region to be the delegate(s) to the next Grand Lodge Convention. The Grand Secretary notifies all local lodges within each Region of the results.

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H. **Eligibility** – Eligible for election as Grand Lodge Delegates are those who have served in a Regional local lodge for at least one term as Chairman, Vice Chairman, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary or Treasurer, providing also that such person is in good standing and has attended a majority of local lodge meetings during the year or can give valid reason(s) for absence.

Section 2 - Term of Office. Duly elected Grand Lodge Delegates shall serve for a term of four years.

Section 3 - Credential for Delegate. Each delegate shall present a properly executed credential to the Committee on Credentials prior to being admitted to the Grand Lodge Convention.

A. The credential must bear the district lodge seal and the signatures of the District Master and District Secretary.

B. The credential for regional delegates must be signed by the Grand Master and the Grand Secretary.

Section 4 -Compensation. Elected Grand Lodge officers and delegates are entitled to compensation for the shortest route of travel to and from the convention. The per diem rate for each day in session and travel must be determined by the Grand Lodge in session.

ARTICLE VIII – PER CAPITA TAX

Section 1 - District Lodges shall remit the established per capita tax for every member under its jurisdiction, in good standing as of December 31 each year, to the Grand Secretary prior to March 1.

Section 2 - Local Lodges in Regions shall pay the per capita tax directly to the Grand Lodge prior to the installation of officers.

Section 3 - District Lodges in Sweden shall pay the per capita tax last established for them, and **The Vasa Star** distribution shall be according to Article XVI.

Section 4 - Changes in Per Capita Tax shall become effective January 1 the year following the G.L. Convention.

Section 5 - Penalty for Delinquency. The G.L. Executive Board shall suspend any district or regional local lodge for failure to remit the established per capita tax. Suspended lodge shall be deprived of representation at convention.

ARTICLE IX – SPECIAL FUNDS

Section 1 - The Old Age and Benefit Fund

A. Purpose

The Old Age and Benefit Fund (OA&B) shall be used for financial aid and assistance to members in need.

B. Assessment

The annual assessment to the fund for members in the U.S.A. and Canada will be determined by the Grand Lodge in session.

C. Structure

1. The OA&B Fund is managed by agreement set up between the Grand Lodge and Colonial Trust Company, state of Connecticut, as set up 30 January 1931.

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2. The OA&B Fund is composed of three parts:
 - a. **The Undrawn Allocation Fund** which is the sum of the funds previously assigned to each district that have not been withdrawn by the members.
 - b. **The Allocation Fund** which is the cash account used to pay benefits to members. The annual allotment from the Fund is deposited into this Fund.
 - c. **The Unallocated amount**, which is the difference between the amount of the Trust Fund less the amounts in a. and b. above.

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D. Allotments.

1. Twelve percent (12%) of the fund capital shall be available for apportionment to qualified members.
2. Each district lodge in the U.S.A. and Canada shall receive a yearly allotment in proportion to the established amount of per capita tax paid to the fund.
3. Regional local lodges are collectively one district.
4. A district lodge (USA/Canada) may vote to donate up to 5% of the district's undrawn allocation to the Vasa National Archives.

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E. Qualifications for Benefits.

1. Members in the United States and Canada who are participating members of a district lodge funeral benefit or local lodge sick benefit fund are eligible.
2. Members in the United States and Canada, who do not qualify under paragraph #1, are eligible after five years of continuous membership from the last date of initiation or reinstatement.

F. **Maximum benefit** paid to qualified member shall be an aggregate total of \$3,000.

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G. **Application** for benefit payment shall be available from the Grand Secretary.

H. **Procedure** for benefit payment. The district lodge executive board shall:

1. Receive and take action on application from local lodge(s).
2. Notify the Grand Secretary of approval and request payment.
3. Receive and forward benefit check to local lodge Recording Secretary for disbursement to recipient.
4. Decide on action to be taken in case the recipient of an issued check passes away prior to receipt, either:
 - a. Forward check to the estate or legal heirs,

OR

- b. Return check to the Grand Secretary for deposit in the Old Age and Benefit Fund account.

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- I. **Eligibility for Benefit Payment.** District lodges shall consider the members' situation and determine the need for financial support.
- J. **Unable to pay established Per Capita Tax.** Payment from the Old Age and Benefit Fund may be requested by District Lodges for up to eight percent of each local lodge membership under its jurisdiction should members prove financially unable to pay the established per capita tax.

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- K. **Administration.** The fund shall be administered by the G.L. Executive Board, which shall by itself or through its authorized agent:

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1. Establish the available allotment for each district lodge at the beginning of the calendar year.
2. Allow unused yearly allotment to accrue and add to the following year's allotment.
3. Publish a yearly report reflecting the fund status.
4. Report fund activities to the Grand Lodge at its regular meeting covering receipts and disbursements.

- L. **Administrative costs** shall be paid from income of the fund.

- M. **Termination of the Fund.** The Fund shall terminate when the Fund has no members. Remaining assets in the Fund shall transfer to the Grand Lodge Endowment Fund. *July 2010*

Section 2 - Grand Lodge Endowment Fund

- A. This fund shall exist and income from its assets shall be used to preserve the memory of the Vasa Order for future generation through:
1. Annual contributions to the Vasa National Archives to be used toward the cost of its operation and genealogical preservation as well as the preservation of Nordic and Vasa Order of America artifacts,
 2. Annual contribution to Vasa Order of America Scholarships offered to eligible students from the United States and Canada enrolled in Nordic Study Programs at accredited colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.
 3. This fund shall be managed by the Bank of America (Colonial Trust Company) unless another financial institution has been selected by the Grand Lodge in session.

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- Section 3 - The Educational Fund** shall be administered by the G.L. Executive Board. The annual assessment amount per member in the USA and Canada shall be set by the Grand Lodge in Session.

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- A. The purpose shall be to promote cultural work, provide scholarship and loan services to qualified members in pursuit of higher education.
- B. Administrative costs shall be paid from income of the fund.
- C. **Application** for a scholarship or language camp award and all other necessary forms shall be available for download, in printable form from the Vasa Order of America website, www.vasaorder.com after October 1. Applications may also be requested from the Grand

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Scholarship Chairman prior to January 15. The completed applications shall be sent, with all relevant supporting information, to the Grand Scholarship Chairman so they are received no later than February 15 with the following:

1. A complete transcript of grades through first half of senior year for high school and fall semester of current academic year for college student.
2. A completed application.
3. A current photo (3" x 4") - preferably black and white.
4. Letters of recommendation from:
 - a. The applicant's local lodge.
 - b. The applicant's Dean, Principal, Teacher or Counselor.
 - c. Reputable citizen(s) within the applicant's community.
5. An original essay of 1,000 words or less.

D. Procedure for Judging. The G.L. Executive Board, in conjunction with the Scholarship Chairman, shall:

1. Appoint three well-known educators or experts in the field of education to serve as impartial judges.
2. Examine all applications and substantiating forms to insure all rules and regulations are followed, and read submitted essays.
3. Forward copies of essays and all other pertinent reports to the judges for final grading of the applicants.
4. Tabulate the results of grading by the judges and select winners based on judge's recommendations.
5. Request additional information, when needed, for final selection of a winner.
6. Make the official announcement of recipients in the June issue of **The Vasa Star**, and notify individual recipients of scholarship awarded.
7. Notify the following officers of the recipient's district and local lodge for the purpose of a proper presentation of the scholarship award:
 - a. The Grand Lodge Deputy.
 - b. The District Master and District Secretary.
 - c. The Local Lodge Recording Secretary.
8. Notify non-recipients of contest results.
9. All decisions made for selection of recipients shall be final and uncontested. All materials submitted, including application, will become the property of the Grand Lodge.

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E. **Annual Scholarship Awards** shall be offered as follows:

1. **One Grand Lodge Scholarship** intended for at least one full year of graduate study at an accredited college or university in the United States, Canada, or one of the Nordic countries. The applicant must have been a Vasa member in the USA or Canada for two years prior to the application deadline. The amount awarded will be decided by the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee in relation to funding available.

2. **One Ellis F. Hillner Award** intended for a student in the field of medicine. The applicant must have been a Vasa member in the USA or Canada for one year prior to the application deadline. The amount awarded will be decided by the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee based on funding available.

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3. **One L. Einar and Edith L. Nilsson Award** intended for a student planning or already enrolled on a full-time equivalent basis and who is a member of District Lodges Connecticut #1, Massachusetts #2 or Rhode Island #3, who plans or is already enrolled at an accredited institution majoring in Political Science, Law, Economics or Business. The applicant must have been a Vasa member for one year prior to the application deadline. The amount awarded will be decided by the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee in relation to funding available.

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4. **One Gladys A. and Russell M. Birtwistle Award** intended for a student planning or already enrolled on a full-time basis at an accredited college or university and who is a member of District Lodges Connecticut #1, Massachusetts #2 or Rhode Island #3. The applicant must have been a Vasa member for one year prior to the application deadline. The amount awarded will be decided by the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee in relation to funding available.

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5. **One Irma and Knute Carlson Award** intended for an upper class college student (Jr. or Sr.), or a graduate student at an accredited college or university. The applicant must have been a Vasa member in the USA or Canada for one year prior to the application deadline. The amount awarded will be decided by the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee in relation to funding available.

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6. **One Bo and Sigrid Bjorling Award** intended for a student, who is a Vasa member or a child/grandchild of a Vasa member (sponsor), planning or already enrolled on a full-time basis at an accredited college or university, majoring in music. The applicant/sponsor must have been a Vasa member in the USA or Canada for one year prior to the application deadline. The amount awarded will be decided by the grand Lodge Scholarship Committee in relation to funding available.

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7. **Up to ten \$1,000.00 College or Vocational School Awards** intended for students planning or already enrolled on a full-time basis at accredited colleges or universities. The applicants must have been Vasa members in the USA or Canada for one year prior to the application deadline. The number awarded will be decided by the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee in relation to funding available.

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8. The amounts of the Scholarships to be published on the Vasa Website.

F. **Scholarship Checks** shall be payable only to the appropriate institution in the recipient's name.

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1. For a scholarship winner who is enrolled in an accredited vocational school or institution of higher learning taking no less than six (6) credits per semester or eight (8) credits per quarter immediately following the award.
2. In extraordinary circumstances, on petition to the Scholarship Committee, payment may be postponed for a period not to exceed two years from date of award.

G. **The Student Loan Account** is funded by the general assets of the Educational Fund and shall be used to fund student loans with a maximum of \$40,000 in outstanding loans at any one time.

1. Each borrower shall be limited to \$1,500 annual maximum and a \$4,500 aggregate total loan amount.
2. Eligibility requirements for loan applicants:
 - a) A Vasa member in good standing with at least two years of membership.
 - b) Must make application through applicant's local lodge on a form secured from the Grand Secretary.
 - c) Local lodge may approve application and forward to the G.L. Executive Board for action.
 - d) Repayment of principal shall be made over a period beginning three months after the date student ceases to be at least a half-time student at an institution of higher learning, and ending three years later. Payments are to be in equal quarterly installments.
 - e) The entire indebtedness becomes due immediately, at the option of the lender, on termination of their membership in the Vasa Order.

The G.L. Executive Board shall be empowered to take whatever action is necessary to collect the amount of indebtedness from the endorser(s) in the event of default on the borrower's part. Authority can be extended to the Scholarship Committee or any other special committee designated by the G.L. Executive Board.

The Grand Secretary shall, at least annually, notify local lodges of balances due on student loans endorsed by the lodge. Local lodges are expected to verify membership-status of endorsed borrower(s) with the Grand Secretary.

Section 4 - The Reimbursement Fund shall be administered by the G.L. Executive Board for the purpose of reimbursement of financial loss to the Grand Lodge, district and local lodges due to neglect or fraud.

- A. Participation is voluntary and the amount of contribution required from participants to sustain the fund shall be determined from time to time, based on the need and limits of coverage selected by each participant.
- B. Limits of coverage are in increments of \$1,000.
 1. Minimum per officer is \$1,000.
 2. Maximum per officer is \$25,000.
- C. Participants shall file the following with the Grand Secretary in the month of December:
 1. Name and title of officer to be covered.

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2. Amount of coverage desired for each officer.
 3. Submit check in the amount of the established contribution for participation.
- D. Notice of rejection shall be forwarded to the lodge in question prior to January 31 of the year coverage had been requested.
- E. Active participation in this fund may waive mandatory requirements in bylaws of any lodge for certain officers to furnish a surety bond with respect to performance of duties.
- F. Reimbursement for actual loss, up to maximum of coverage paid for, will be provided to active participant(s) in the fund when:
1. An officer fails to properly account for funds.
 2. Loss of funds is due to misappropriation or neglect.
 3. Written notice of known or suspected loss is forwarded to the Grand Secretary.
 4. Detailed proof of loss is mailed to the Grand Secretary within four months of initially given notice.
- G. **The Reimbursement Committee** or its designated representative shall have the right to confirm any and all claims. However, in order to settle any differences between a lodge and the Reimbursement Committee, an arbitrator agreeable to both sides shall make the final decision.
1. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final.
 2. Notice of claim for reimbursement must be given in writing within two years of loss.
- H. Administrative expenses shall be paid from the income of the fund.

Section 5 - The Archive Fund. A fund established for the construction and operation of the Vasa Order of America Archives, Inc. and be managed by the Board of the National Archives. The annual assessment of \$1.50 per member, payable by members in the USA and Canada, together with any additional assessments and donations to the Archives shall be forwarded to the Treasurer of the National Archives as and when received.

Section 6 - Elsa Fleetwood Memorial Fund. This fund is maintained in the memory of Sister Elsa Fleetwood, D.L. 19, who served the Vasa Order in Sweden as both a G.L. Cultural Director and as a G.L. Youth Director.

- A. This fund shall be used solely in support of the **Elsa Fleetwood Cultural and Youth Exchange Program** and provides for an annual grant, determined by the Grand Lodge Executive Board, to projects in the spirit of Elsa Fleetwood, such as:
1. Culture and Youth Exchange between USA/Canada and Sweden.
 2. Youth Camps.
 3. Culture and Youth Camps and similar projects.
 4. Other projects which benefit Cultural and Youth activities.
- B. The program was established to strengthen cultural and/or youth oriented contacts between Sweden, the USA and Canada. It is intended to encourage the realization of different culture and youth projects which serve this purpose.

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C. The Program is administered by a standing committee of the Grand Lodge comprised of:

- * G.L. MEB - Sweden who will serve as chairman.
- * Grand Master
- * Vice Grand Master
- * G.L. Cultural Director – USA/Canada
- * G.L. Cultural Director – Sweden
- * G.L. Youth Director – USA/Canada
- * G.L. Youth Director – Sweden

D. Application for consideration of the award shall be made through a recommendation from the member's District Lodge Executive Board to the Grand Master. Applicants from a local lodge which is under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge shall apply with a recommendation from their own lodge. The application shall be supported by a detailed plan of the project, its implementation schedule and submitted not later than April 15.

E. The grant will be alternately awarded to a project in Sweden and USA/Canada each year in the month of June.

F. The granting of the award and the results of its use will be fully published in **The Vasa Star** and other periodicals. The Grand Master shall report on the program to the Grand Lodge in session.

Section 7 - The Charitable Contributions Fund. This fund shall be developed, administered and maintained by the Grand Lodge Executive Board.

ARTICLE X – GRAND LODGE DEPUTY

Section 1 - Qualifications. The Grand Master must consider the following qualifications when appointing Grand Lodge Deputies.

A. Active or passive member of the Grand Lodge.

OR

B. Past District Master.

C. In regional lodges, candidate must have served as Chairman or hold Past Chairman's degree.

Section 2 - Duties. The Grand Lodge Deputy is the official representative of the Grand Master in his/her district lodge, and as such shall:

A. Install district lodge officers immediately following election at the district lodge meeting, provided all indebtedness to the Grand Lodge has been paid.

B. Be invited and attend district lodge executive board meetings.

C. Support and advise the district lodge in its work.

D. Submit written records semi-annually or more often if necessary to the Grand Master, in regards to the condition and progress in supervised district.

E. Be entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with the performance of their duties, subject to maximum allowance determined by the G.L. Executive Board.

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ARTICLE XI – CULTURAL WORK

Section 1 - The Cultural Committee shall consist of the following appointed Grand Lodge officers:

- *Cultural Director for USA/Canada
- *Cultural Director for Sweden
- *Director of Vasa Activities Club
- *Audio Visual Director
- *Director of Languages

and the District Cultural Leaders.

Section 2 - The aims shall be to coordinate efforts in promoting cultural work and encourage the organization of groups in order to further cultural activities within the Vasa Order.

Section 3 - Duties of the G.L. Cultural Directors. The G.L. Cultural Directors shall:

- A. Jointly work on cultural issues, cooperate closely in implementing cultural programs and guide the direction and growth of all cultural activities.
- B. Maintain the master copy of the Cultural Leader's Resource Book and prepare appropriate enhancements to it for the benefit of the local lodge Cultural Leaders. Such revisions shall be mailed to all local lodge Cultural Leaders in the Order.
- C. Promote teaching of Swedish and other Nordic languages, literature, art and music.
- D. Promote plans to observe special Nordic and American holidays.
- E. Promote participation in hobby shows, arts and crafts shows, musical and dance groups, folk fairs, parades and other civic cultural activities.
- F. Submit an annual report to each District Cultural Leader, summarizing activities reported in their annual reports.
- G. Promote the formation of Vasa Activities Clubs.
- H. Each submit a detailed, written report on cultural activities during the term and make recommendation(s) for future development of cultural work to the Grand Lodge in session.

Section 4 - Vasa Activities Club. The G.L. Director of Vasa Activities Clubs shall request issuance of special charters from the G.L. Executive Board.

- A. The purpose shall be to encourage active participation by young people, leading Vasa Junior Clubs, and adult groups in such activities as: singing, dancing, music, drill team, sports, hiking, debate, bowling, stamp collecting, coin collecting, language studies, ham radio, etc.
- B. Vasa membership in a local lodge is required for at least half of the Vasa Activities Club members.
- C. All officers must be members of a Vasa local lodge.
- D. Upon dissolution of a chartered Vasa Activities Club, the retired charter must be returned to the Grand Secretary and any remaining funds shall be turned over to the district lodge.

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ARTICLE XII – CHILDREN AND JUNIOR CLUBS

Section 1 - The Children and Junior Clubs Committee shall be composed of:

- *G.L. Youth Director for USA/Canada
- *G.L. Youth Director for Sweden

and the District Youth Supervisors.

Section 2 - The aims shall be to coordinate efforts in forming clubs and encourage Nordic folk dancing, music, singing, language studies, etc., and to adopt plans for suitable working methods and activities, which will prepare the children of Vasa members to accept responsibilities of Vasa Lodge work.

Section 3 - Institution. Vasa member(s) may institute a Children's or Youth Club by requesting a charter from the appropriate Grand Lodge Youth Director.

The Grand Lodge shall reimburse the organizer(s) of the new club for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with its institution.

Section 4 - Duties of the Grand Lodge Youth Directors. The G.L. Youth Directors shall:

- A. Jointly working on youth issues, cooperate closely in implementing youth programs and have complete supervision of youth work within the Vasa Order.
- B. Keep and maintain a record book of all children's and youth clubs, recording:
 - 1. Name and number of club and date of institution.
 - 2. Name of organizer(s) / sponsor(s) and name and address of club leader.
 - 3. Excerpts from annual club reports.
- C. Request an annual report from District Youth Supervisors, summarizing their club activities, and compile an overview of annual reports received and submit back to District Youth Supervisors.
- D. Each submit a detailed, written report on all youth activities during the term and make recommendations for future development and growth of youth clubs to the Grand Lodge in session.

Section 5 - Vasa Order Junior Club Emblem. The Emblem shall be presented to a Vasa member having served as District Youth Supervisor or Children's Club Leader for a period of five years, not necessarily in succession.

- A. The district lodge, or its executive board, shall apply for the Emblem to the Grand Secretary, who in turn must obtain a recommendation from the G.L. Youth Director.
- B. The five year rule may be waived, provided the district lodge or its executive board state very special services rendered by a District Youth Supervisor, Local Club Supervisor or any other Vasa member on the application. The Grand Secretary must obtain a recommendation from the G.L. Youth Director.
- C. The Grand Lodge shall defray the cost of V.O.J.C. Emblems granted to worthy Vasa members.

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ARTICLE XIII – DISTINGUISHED SERVICE EMBLEM

A **Distinguished Service Emblem** shall be awarded to members having made outstanding contributions to the Vasa Order of America in the service of the Order.

The Emblem shall be similar in appearance to the Past District Master's Emblem, however, white enamel shall be used. The crown and bar shall bear the inscription "For Distinguished Service" and be attached to a purple ribbon.

Application must be made by a candidate's district lodge or its executive board, listing complete information as to qualifications for consideration.

The G.L. Executive Board may approve the application, majority vote required, and may not approve more than four applications during each Grand Lodge term.

ARTICLE XIV – GRAND LODGE SEAL

The official seal of the Grand Lodge shall include the Grand Lodge Emblem and the date of organization. The Grand Secretary shall affix the seal to all official documents of the Grand Lodge.

ARTICLE XV – LODGE SUPPLIES

All lodges shall obtain membership cards (no charge), charters, constitutions, rituals, regalia, and other materials required for uniformity in lodge work, solely from the Grand Lodge.

ARTICLE XVI – OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

The Vasa Star shall be the official publication of the Vasa Order of America.

1. The Grand Master and **The Vasa Star** Committee shall be responsible for printing and distribution.
2. The Grand Master, in conjunction with the Grand Secretary and the Business Manager, shall:
 - A. Make contracts with the most advantageous suppliers for needed services, approved by the G.L. Executive Board.
 - B. Obtain qualified assistance in procuring advertising.
3. The Grand Master, in conjunction with the Editor, shall:
 - A. Secure advertisers.
 - B. Establish a sound editorial policy consistent with the aims and purposes of the Vasa Order.
4. The Grand Master shall:
 - A. Make every effort to stay within available funds.
 - B. Arrange for a copy to be received by every Vasa family in the United States, Canada and Sweden.
 1. Bills for payment for printing and distribution in Sweden must be forwarded to the Grand Secretary after each issue is published.

CONSTITUTION FOR GRAND LODGE

2. **The Vasa Star** shall be a useful tool for the promotion of the Order, and equal space must be allocated to all district and local lodges as well as individual members.
 3. The prevalent language shall be English.
 4. Articles in Swedish are encouraged, preferably accompanied by an English translation.
- C. The Grand Master together with the Grand Secretary shall appoint a Circulation Manager to maintain **The Vasa Star** mailing list.
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ARTICLE XVII – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at a meeting of the Grand Lodge under the following conditions:

1. By a two-thirds vote, provided the proposed amendment had been submitted to the Grand Secretary - received by same - at least one hundred twenty days prior to the opening of the Grand Lodge meeting.
2. Each proposal for amendment is submitted in typed or printed form:
 - A. From a district lodge - bearing the D.L. seal and properly signed,
 - B. From a local lodge - bearing the L.L. seal and properly signed,
 - C. From individual member(s) in good standing, attested to by the L.L. Recording Secretary,
 - D. From a G.L. Officer as a recommendation in their report to the Grand Lodge, if it involves a change in the Constitution,
 - E. From The Board of Directors of the Vasa Order of America National Archives.
3. The Grand Secretary shall have distributed true and accurate copies of all proposals at least sixty days prior to the opening of the Grand Lodge meeting to:
 - A. All elected G.L. Officers and G.L. Delegates who will serve during the meeting when proposal for amendment is to be acted upon.
 - B. All Honorary Life Members of the Grand Lodge.
 - C. All District Secretaries and local lodge Recording Secretaries.
4. Amendment(s) adopted at the GL meeting shall become effective immediately following passage.

CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

A district lodge must submit proposed bylaws to the Grand Lodge Executive Board for approval within six months of receiving its charter.

Composition and requirements are at the discretion of the district lodge, however, the following must be used as guidelines and sets forth requirements which shall serve the district lodge until its own bylaws have been approved.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND NUMBER

The district lodge shall decide on a name and be given a number prior to the time of institution. The name shall have reference to geographical jurisdiction and the number shall numerically follow that given to the last instituted district lodge, and becomes part of the district lodge name.

ARTICLE II – JURISDICTION

The district lodge shall have jurisdiction over the territory as defined in its charter, and all present and future local lodges within the stated territory shall be subordinate to the district lodge.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Classification. A district lodge may have four classes of membership.

1. **Active Member.** A district lodge shall have the right to decide in its own bylaws the composition of its active membership.

In the absence of any D.L. bylaw covering this matter, the active membership shall be composed of the elected district officers, the elected district delegates, all honorary life members of the district lodge and all Past District Masters.

2. **Passive Member.** Composition of passive membership shall be local lodge members having served as delegates or held an elected office in the district lodge.

A. Passive members shall be entitled to attend district lodge meetings with right of speech, unless otherwise specified in the D.L. bylaws.

B. Passive members shall not be entitled to vote, unless otherwise specified by the District Lodge.

3. **Honorary Life Member.** Proposal must be submitted to the district lodge in session, or its executive board, by member(s) of the district lodge stating qualifications, and requires that:

A. Candidate is an active or passive member.

B. Majority of votes cast favor the proposal.

Honorary life members are entitled to attend all district lodge conventions during the member's lifetime with all the privileges of an active member.

4. **Honorary Member.** Proposal must be submitted to the District Lodge in session, or its Executive Board, by member(s) of the district lodge stating qualifications. Candidate must be a non-member of Vasa, worthy of special recognition for personal contributions in support of the Order within District Lodge jurisdiction. Honorary members are not entitled to attend district lodge meetings nor enjoy any special privileges.

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CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

Section 1 - Regular. District lodges shall decide the time and place for a regular meeting, however, a district lodge meeting must be held at least every two years.

Section 2 - Special. The District Master, in conjunction with the district executive board, may call a special meeting, provided there is an established need and a majority vote favors the meeting.

Section 3 - Quorum. District lodges shall decide the number of active members needed for a quorum, however, at least eleven shall be required.

Section 4 – Number of Delegates to District Lodge. Each district lodge shall determine in its bylaws the number of delegates each local lodge is entitled to, based on total membership.

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Section 5 – Qualification for election as Delegate to Grand Lodge Convention:

A. Candidate has served one or more terms as a District Master, Vice District Master, District Secretary, District Financial Secretary, District Treasurer, District Cultural Leader or Member of the District Executive Board.

B. In the absence of a sufficient number of members qualifying under A above, the District Lodge shall elect delegates from its active membership in order to obtain full representation at the Grand Lodge Convention.

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Section 6 - Delegates to the Grand Lodge. Nomination and election of delegates to the Grand Lodge must be conducted at a regular district lodge meeting at least four months prior to the Grand Lodge convention, and only active members of the district lodge are eligible to serve as Grand Lodge delegates.

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ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1 - District lodges shall elect the following officers, unless otherwise stipulated in the approved district bylaws:

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- *District Master
- *Vice District Master
- *District Secretary
- *District Treasurer
- *District Cultural Leader
- *-One or more Member(s) of the *District Executive Board
- *District Trustee
- *3 District Auditors

Other officers may be elected or appointed:

- *Assistant District Secretary
- *District Chaplain
- *District Master of Ceremonies
- *Assistant District Master of Ceremonies
- *District Inner Guard
- *District Outer Guard
- *District Membership Chairman
- *District Lodge Historian
- *District Youth Supervisor
- *Vasa National Archives Representative

CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

Section 2 - The office of **Past District Master** shall be filled by the outgoing District Master.

Section 3 - Qualifications. District lodges shall decide upon qualifications of candidate(s) for election to a district lodge office.

A. **Candidate for District Trustee** must be:

1. An active member in good standing, having served one term as an elected district lodge officer.
2. Twenty-one years of age or older.

Section 4 - Term of Office shall be the time elapsed between regular district lodge meetings.

Section 5 - Vacancy in Office. A vacancy in the office of the District Master, District Secretary and District Master of Ceremonies shall be filled by the Vice District Master, Assistant District Secretary and Assistant District Master of Ceremonies respectively. The office(s) thus vacated and any other vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the District Master, approved by the District Executive Board.

Section 6 - Other elected or appointed officers may be added as conditions warrant.

Section 7 - Duties of Officers.

A. **The District Master** is the highest ranking administrative officer and shall have general supervision over activities of the Order within the district, and shall:

1. Take an active part in all matters pertaining to its development and progress.
2. Preside over all meetings of the district lodge and its executive board.
3. Appoint a District Deputy for each Local Lodge within the district and officers - not elected - in accordance with Section 1 above.
4. Appoint a Vasa Star correspondent who shall be responsible to gather information and submit articles for publication on district and local lodge activities.
5. Appoint committees as needed, except a nominating committee, which must be elected by the district lodge or its executive board.
6. With the approval of the D.L. Executive Board, remove any officer or committee member failing to fulfill duties in accordance with prescribed rules and regulations.
7. Be the custodian of the district lodge charter and other valuable articles of the district lodge.
8. Submit a term record on the progress and growth of the district lodge and make recommendations to the district lodge in session.

B. **The Vice District Master** shall aid and assist the District Master and assume all the duties of the District Master in his/her absence.

C. **The District Secretary** is the recording as well as the corresponding secretary and shall:

1. Keep and maintain careful and impartial records of all proceedings of the district lodge and its executive board.

CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

2. Attend to all district lodge correspondence.
 3. Receive all monies paid to the district lodge and turn over same to the District Treasurer in return for an official receipt for same. The Assistant Secretary or Financial Secretary may deposit funds into the Lodge or District bank account when the Treasurer is not available, and give deposit slips to the Treasurer at the earliest convenience.
 4. Issue official vouchers for the payment of legitimate bills and death benefits.
 5. Furnish a surety bond for the faithful performance of all duties as required by the district lodge, which shall pay the established premium.
 6. Furnish the Grand Secretary with the official yearly report of the district lodge no later than March 1, including Per Capita card/payment.
 7. Maintain a file of the individual gold seal impressions of every local lodge under the jurisdiction of the district lodge.
 8. Forward to the Grand Lodge Cultural Director, USA/Canada or Sweden as appropriate, the name and address of:
 - a) the new Cultural Leader for the district lodge following the district convention, and
 - b) the new Cultural Leader for each of the local lodges in the district following the completion of all installations.
- D. **The District Treasurer** is in charge of all monies, bonds and funds belonging to the district lodge, and shall:
1. Pay all bills ordered by official voucher, properly signed by the District Master and District Secretary.
 2. Pay stipulated funeral benefits on order from the District Secretary, counter-signed by the District Master, to deceased funeral benefit fund member's local lodge, which is responsible for payment to entitled recipient(s).
 3. Furnish a surety bond for the faithful performance of duties to the district lodge, which shall pay the established premium.
 4. Issue an official receipt for monies received from the District Secretary.
 5. Administer funds in accordance with regulations and rules of the district lodge or its executive board.
- E. **District Membership Chairman** shall be responsible to help maintain or increase current membership within the district lodge by:
1. Initiating and coordinating membership drives in cooperation with local lodges.
 2. Initiate the formation of new lodges and/or support the efforts of individual members who are actively trying to form a new local lodge.
 3. Chair seminar(s) for local lodge membership chairmen as well as other officers and members to address the issues of gaining new members and specifically retaining current members.

CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

F. **District Lodge Historian** shall:

1. Keep and maintain a district lodge history book which is to include photos of all important and interesting events which take place in the district, identifying all persons, places and dates.
2. Obtain copy of all reports and minutes of the district lodge and extract items of historical value.
3. Present a full written report at the district convention.
4. Forward to the Grand Lodge Historian a summary of pertinent information along with any photos which would be of historic value. This report shall be submitted on the date coinciding with the district convention.
5. Immediately after the district lodge convention turn over the history book and all files to successor.

G. District lodges may set forth duties of other elected and appointed officers as they see fit.

Section 8 - Composition of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall be composed of the District Master, Vice District Master, District Secretary, District Treasurer and one or more member(s) of the Executive Board. It is recommended that the District Cultural Leader be included. Additional members may be added as deemed necessary and the District Master serves as chairman and the District Secretary as recording secretary.

Section 9 - Duties of the Executive Board. The district lodge executive board shall manage the affairs and have general supervision over all business pertaining to the district lodge in the interim between district lodge meetings.

ARTICLE VI – PER CAPITA TAX

Section 1 - Remittance. Local lodges shall remit the established per capita tax for each member in good standing as of December 31 to the District Secretary prior to installation of local lodge officers.

Section 2 - Penalty for Delinquency. The district lodge or its executive board may suspend any local lodge under its jurisdiction for failure to remit the established per capita tax, in which case the local lodge shall be deprived of right to representation at district lodge meetings.

ARTICLE VII – STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees are at the discretion of each district lodge.

ARTICLE VIII – SPECIAL FUNDS

Section 1 - A Funeral Benefit Fund may be established and maintained for the benefit of members under district lodge jurisdiction, who are members of a local lodge sick benefit fund (LL Const. ART. VII, Sec. 2).

- A. The fund shall be supported by an established assessment for each participating member.
- B. The D.L. Executive Board shall establish a death benefit amount, the mode of payment and any additional assessment(s) needed to maintain the fund solvent.
- C. The local lodge shall collect the established assessment from each participating member and submit to the District Secretary for disbursement to the funeral benefit fund.

CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

D. Dissolution. In the absence of State regulations, funeral fund members may elect to dissolve the fund by majority vote at a special meeting called specifically for that purpose. Funeral fund members shall be notified at least thirty days prior to the meeting at which dissolution will be voted, and must be provided with absentee ballots to be returned to the District Secretary at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting, if the member cannot be present at the meeting. If dissolution is voted, each funeral fund member is entitled to his/her pro-rata share of the fund. Member may elect to contribute all or part of his/her individual interest to any fund of the local, district or Grand Lodge, the Vasa Order of America National Archives, Inc., or to any charitable or non-profit organization of his/her choosing.

Section 2 - Payment to Transferred Funeral Benefit Member. Transfer of a funeral benefit fund member to a local lodge under jurisdiction of a different district lodge requires an official transfer card and that the effective date of transfer is the date of acceptance by the member's new local lodge.

The district lodge from which member transferred shall be responsible for member's stipulated death benefit for three months from transfer acceptance date, and the district lodge to which member transferred shall be responsible thereafter, provided such district lodge maintains a funeral benefit fund.

Section 3 - Funds for Special Purposes may be established and maintained, provided:

- A. Special fund bylaws are approved by the Grand Lodge Executive Board.
- B. Membership in a special fund is strictly voluntary and member(s) not wishing to belong must not be subject to dismissal from the Order.

ARTICLE IX – INITIATION FEES

An initiation fee may be established for new local lodge members, however, members of children's and junior clubs wishing to join the Order shall be exempt from any initiation fee(s).

ARTICLE X – DISTRICT LODGE SEAL

District lodges shall be issued an official seal containing the name and number of the district lodge and date of institution.

ARTICLE XI – DISTRICT DEPUTY

Section 1 - Qualifications. When appointing District Deputies, the District Master shall consider the following:

- A. Candidate is a member of the district lodge.

OR

- B. Candidate is a Past Chairman, or, holds the Past Chairman's degree.

Section 2 - Duties. The District Deputy is the official representative of the District Master in the local lodge to which he/she has been appointed, and as such shall:

- A. Install the officers of the local lodge, provided the local lodge Treasurer has presented an official receipt for payment of the established per capita tax and reports of accounts for the prior term have been accepted by the local lodge.
- B. Give the local lodge password for the current term to the Chairman at the first meeting of the calendar year.

CONSTITUTION FOR DISTRICT LODGE

- C. Visit the local lodge in an official capacity at least twice during a year. Expense incurred with official visits shall be reimbursed by the local lodge.
- D. Aid and assist the local lodge in its activities and be fully prepared to instruct officers in ritual lodge work.
- E. Attempt to settle any dispute(s) regarding interpretation of the Constitution or Bylaws.
- F. Communicate the general progress and activities of the local lodge to the District Master.

ARTICLE XII – PAST DISTRICT MASTER’S JEWEL

Qualifications. Only a member who has served as District Master shall be entitled to receive and wear the Past District Master’s Jewel or Pin.

The District Secretary shall, in writing, request the Grand Lodge to issue the Past District Master’s Jewel.

The Grand Lodge shall inscribe the jewel with the name of the recipient and year(s) served as District Master.

ARTICLE XIII – CHILDREN’S AND JUNIOR CLUBS

Section 1 - The District Youth Supervisor, elected by the district lodge or appointed by the District Master and approved by the district lodge executive board, shall serve during the term of the District Master.

Section 2 - Duties. The District Youth Supervisor shall:

- A. Have supervision over all activities of clubs within the district lodge jurisdiction.
- B. Encourage the formation of clubs in local lodges or interest two or more local lodges to sponsor a club.
- C. Appoint club leader(s) or approve of club leader(s) selected by the local lodge(s) or booster committee.
- D. Request an annual summary report of club activities from leaders.
- E. Submit an annual report to the appropriate Grand Lodge Youth Director summarizing club activities within the district.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

Adopted district lodge bylaws may be amended only by the district lodge in session, and become effective when approved by the G.L. Executive Board, provided:

1. The proposal for amendment had been submitted to the District Secretary - and received by same - at least forty-five days prior to the opening of the district lodge convention.
2. Each proposal for amendment is submitted in typed or printed form:
 - A. From a local lodge - bearing the LL seal and properly signed,
 - B. From individual member(s) in good standing, attested to by the LL Recording Secretary,
 - C. From a D.L. officer as a recommendation in their report to the district lodge, if it involves a change in the district lodge bylaws.

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3. The District Secretary shall have distributed true and accurate copies of proposal(s) for amendment at least thirty days prior to the opening of the district lodge convention to:
 - A. All active members of the district lodge.
 - B. All elected district lodge delegates, who will serve during the district meeting when proposal(s) for amendment shall be acted upon.
 - C. All Recording Secretaries of the local lodges within the jurisdiction of the district lodge.

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A local lodge must submit proposed bylaws to the District Lodge Executive Board for approval within six months of receiving its charter. A Regional Lodge must submit proposed bylaws to the G.L. Executive Board for approval within six months of receiving its charter.

Composition and requirements are at the discretion of the local lodge, however, the following must be used as guidelines and sets forth minimal requirements and shall serve the local lodge until its own bylaws have been approved.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND NUMBER

Each local lodge shall decide on a name and receive a number prior to the time of institution. The number shall numerically follow that given to the last instituted local lodge, and becomes part of the local lodge name.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Classification. A local lodge may have three classes of membership.

A. **Active Member.** A person of good moral character who:

1. Was born in a Nordic country or is of Nordic ancestry, or
2. Is a child (by birth or adoption, including adopted child of non-Nordic heritage) of a Vasa member.
3. Is a spouse of a Vasa member or of a candidate approved for membership, or
4. Is a non-Nordic widow or widower of a person of Nordic origin or descent,
5. Is not of Nordic ancestry, but is committed to the promotion and advancement of Swedish and Nordic heritage and culture.

and has reached fourteen years of age at the time the local lodge votes on the application for membership, is eligible to join and become an active member.

B. **Honorary Life Member.** Proposal must be submitted by member(s) in good standing and requires that:

1. The candidate is a Vasa member.
2. The proposal is read at three consecutive meetings prior to voting. (The vote may be taken after the third reading), and
3. A majority of votes cast must favor proposal.

An Honorary Life Member is entitled to attend and fully participate in all local lodge meetings during the member's lifetime. The local lodge may pay some or all dues and assessments on behalf of the member.

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C. **Honorary Member.** A proposal must be submitted by member(s) in good standing and requires that:

1. The candidate **is not** a Vasa member, **or is** a Vasa member **and not** of the local lodge making the award.

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2. The candidate is worthy of special recognition for personal contributions and support of the local lodge.
3. Voting shall be by secret ballot and a majority of votes cast must favor the proposal.

An Honorary Member **is not entitled** to attend meetings of the local lodge (unless member of another local lodge), nor enjoys special privileges.

Section 2 - Application for Active Membership

- A. A qualified candidate who seeks membership in a local lodge either as a new member, through reinstatement or by transfer, shall:
 1. Present an official application for membership together with one dollar, which shall constitute part of the regular initiation fee or annual dues.
 2. Be recommended by a Vasa member in good standing where admission is requested.
 3. Note the name and number of sponsor's local lodge, in case the sponsor is not a member of applicant's intended lodge.
- B. A qualified candidate who is a member of a Vasa children's or youth club shall be exempt from the payment of any stipulated initiation fee(s).
- C. **Sponsorship of an unqualified candidate** is strictly forbidden and any Vasa member who knowingly sponsors an unworthy candidate shall be subject to suspension of membership or expulsion from the Vasa Order.
- D. **Privileged information.**
 1. Application for membership shall be considered as privileged information and must not be made known to any person(s) outside the Vasa Order.
 2. Rejection of an application for membership shall also be considered privileged information and must not be made known to any person(s) outside the Vasa Order.
- E. Prior to voting on any application(s), the Chairman shall read paragraph D, 1 and 2 above to members present.
- F. **Resubmitting rejected application** for membership is permissible after six months from the date of rejection.
- G. Reinstatement application may be approved, provided, the candidate pays any stipulated "special fee" for initiation as prescribed by the local lodge.
- H. **Transfer application** shall be acted upon in the following manner:
 1. The local lodge **to which** the member applies for a transfer shall receive and act on the official application which must note the name and number of applicant's present local lodge, and then:
 - a) May request a stipulated transfer fee.
 - b) Must request an official transcript card from the applicant's present local lodge after the application for membership transfer has been approved.

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- c) Forward pro-rated dues and assessments owed to the applicant's present local lodge along with a request for a transfer card.
 - d) Recording Secretary must record member's original initiation date and years of continuous service in the local lodge records.
 - e) Notify the transfer member of acceptance and request appearance before the lodge to be formally received.
2. The local lodge **from which** the member desires to transfer, shall:
- a) Take immediate action on request for transfer.
 - b) Grant transfer request provided all dues and transfer fees have been paid in full.
 - c) Forward any **advanced dues received** to the member's new local lodge along with official transfer card.
 - d) In the event transfer member is a participant in a sick-benefit fund, be responsible for benefit payment(s) up to thirty days from transfer acceptance date.
 - e) Funeral fund benefit shall be paid in accordance with bylaws of the district lodge.

Section 3 - Membership Committee. All properly presented and accepted applications for membership shall be referred to a membership committee, which shall be composed of at least two local lodge members in good standing.

A. **Duties.** The membership committee shall:

1. Interview applicant(s) thoroughly to determine their character and interest in the Vasa Order, and make recommendation(s) to the local lodge for action.
2. Sign the application(s) for membership in the designated space.
3. Perform all other duties as required by the Constitution and bylaws of the local lodge.

Section 4 - Balloting on an application for membership shall be called for by the Chairman as soon as the application has been duly approved.

A. **Procedure.** The ballot box may be used or the Chair together with the membership may decide on the method of voting.

1. Each white ball cast is a vote to accept the candidate.
2. Each black ball cast is a vote to reject the candidate. The presence of three or more black balls rejects the candidate for membership.
3. In case of rejection at first ballot, a member may move for a second ballot. A majority of votes cast must favor a second ballot prior to re-balloting.
4. The second ballot shall rescind the first and thus becomes the deciding ballot.

B. **Rescinding a favorable ballot** shall be permitted if, after balloting, **but prior to Initiation**, it becomes known that the candidate is neither desirable nor worthy of membership in the Vasa Order of America. The Chairman **must** accept a motion to rescind the prior ballot in favor of membership. A majority of votes cast must favor a motion to rescind and thus reject the application for membership.

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Section 5 - Initiation. Accepted candidate(s) shall be advised by the Recording Secretary of the time and place for initiation, and must clearly indicate to the candidate:

- A. Candidate's obligation to be present.
- B. Initiation must take place no later than two months after the acceptance of the application for membership.
- C. Non-compliance with either A or B above, without a valid reason, shall nullify the accepted application for membership. Any initiation fee(s) paid shall be forfeited.
- D. Postponement of initiation beyond the two month limit is authorized, provided a motion to that effect is favored by a majority of votes cast.

Section 6 - Beginning of Membership shall be counted from the date the member was last initiated into the Vasa Order unless the original date is reinstated by the payment of all back dues in full.

Section 7 - Forfeiture of Membership shall be declared by the Chairman when thorough investigation verifies that the member in question falsified their application for membership.

Section 8 - Separation from the Order. While separated from the Order all rights and privileges are suspended.

Section 9 - Dual Membership. Membership in more than one local lodge of the Vasa Order shall be governed by the following:

- A. A member may hold membership in not more than two local lodges of the Vasa Order of America.
- B. A dual member may serve as an elected officer in both lodges to which he/she belongs, provided no office is duplicated in both lodges, such as chairman in two lodges at the same time.
- C. When applying for dual membership, a statement from the original local lodge must show membership in good standing, attested to by the Financial Secretary.
- D. Dues and per capita tax must be paid to both lodges.
- E. The Recording Secretary of each local lodge the dual member belongs to, must provide an accurate account of all such members in the local lodge to the Grand Secretary.

Section 10 - Membership Card. A multi-year membership card shall be issued by the Financial Secretary and updated upon payment of dues. This card shall serve as proof of good standing in the Order.

ARTICLE III – MEETINGS

Section 1 - Regular. A minimum of nine regular meetings must be held during the year with social meetings held in the months when a regular meeting is not conducted.

- A. The time and place for regular meetings shall be as designated by the local lodge.
- B. Cancellation of a regular meeting is permitted, provided all members had been notified in sufficient time prior to voting on proposal to cancel meeting.
- C. Change in time and/or place for a regular meeting of the local lodge.

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1. A temporary change must be decided at a previous meeting and if a motion is passed, all members must be notified in writing in sufficient time for the meeting.
2. A permanent change requires a notice of motion at a regular meeting, and all members shall be notified in writing:
 - a) of the entire motion as presented.
 - b) of the date when the presented motion will come before the local lodge for final vote.
3. All members must be notified of the final outcome of the vote, in writing, prior to effective date.

Section 2 - Special. A special meeting may be called by the Chairman, together with the Recording Secretary, provided:

- A. A definite need has been established.
- B. Seven or more members in good standing request in writing a desire and need for a special meeting.
- C. All members are notified in writing at least forty-eight hours prior to the special meeting, stating:
 1. The time and place, and
 2. All business to be discussed and transacted during the meeting. No other business may come before the lodge at a special meeting.

Section 3 – Cultural heritage programs could be scheduled in addition to regular meetings. Such programs could be publicized and open to the community. Cultural programs could be an occasion to promote membership and be free of business.

Section 4 – Quorum needed to transact any business of the local lodge shall be at least seven members in good standing.

Section 5 - Delegates to the District Lodge Convention shall represent the local lodge to which the elected delegate belongs.

Qualifications for election as district lodge delegates:

- A. Candidate has served one or more terms as a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer or Cultural Leader in the local lodge.
- B. Candidate is a member in good standing having attended a majority of local lodge meetings during the year (or gives valid reason(s) for absence).
- C. In the absence of a sufficient number of past officers as in A-1 above, the local lodge shall elect delegate(s) from its general membership in order to obtain full representation at the district convention, and that newly instituted local lodges are entitled to representation at the district convention without a waiting period of six months. Requirements as set forth in A-2 above and Art. IV - Sec. 2 must be met.
- D. Dual members may be eligible to be a delegate to the district convention from either of the local lodges to which the member belongs, provided all qualifications are met.

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ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section 1 - Officers. The local lodge shall elect the following officers:

*Chairman	*Chaplain
*Vice Chairman	*Master of Ceremonies
*Recording Secretary	*Assistant Master of Ceremonies
*Assistant Recording Secretary	*Inner Guard
*Financial Secretary	*Outer Guard (optional)
*Assistant Financial Secretary	*3 Auditors
*Treasurer	*3 Trustees
*Cultural Leader	

Other officers may be elected or appointed:

- *Historian
- *Vasa National Archives Representative

- A. The office of Past Chairman shall be filled by the outgoing Chairman.
- B. Election procedure for Trustees and Auditors are found in Sec. 3D.
- C. Additional officers may be elected or appointed as specified in district or local lodge bylaws.

Section 2 - Qualifications. A candidate for local lodge office shall be a member in good standing with at least six months membership in the local lodge.

- A. To be nominated and elected to local lodge Chairman, it shall be required that the candidate has served as an officer of the lodge at least one term, except when a new local lodge is instituted.
- B. Election procedures for Trustees and Auditors are found in Sec. 3D.
- C. A candidate for local lodge Trustee must be:
 - 1. A member in good standing at least twenty-one years of age.
 - 2. A member who previously served as an elected officer in the local lodge, except when a new lodge is instituted.

Section 3 - Nomination and Election.

- A. Nominations shall be held at the regular meeting preceding that of election, and nominations must remain open until immediately prior to the time of election.
- B. All elected positions must be balloted on separately, and a plurality of votes may be sufficient to elect.
- C. A district lodge may specify the time for nomination and election of local lodge officers in its bylaws. In the absence of such requirements, local lodge elections must be held at the first regular meeting in the month of December.
- D. Newly instituted local lodges shall elect three Trustees and Auditors to serve for one, two and three years respectively. Thereafter, one Trustee and one Auditor shall then be elected for a three year term during regular election of officers. The Trustee and Auditor serving the last year of the three year term shall be chairman of the Trustees and Auditors respectively.

Section 4 - Term of Office shall be from the date of installation for a period as specified by the district or local lodge bylaws.

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Section 5 - Election Tally Committee. The local lodge Chairman shall appoint a committee of at least three local lodge members in good standing to serve during election of officers.

Duties. The Election Tally Committee is responsible:

- A. For ascertaining from the Financial Secretary that each candidate is in good standing and qualified to stand for election.
- B. To distribute and collect all ballots.
- C. To check all ballots for correctness.
- D. To count all correct ballots cast for each candidate and report to the Chairman the total ballots received for each candidate.

Section 6 - Vacancy in Office. A vacancy in the office of Chairman, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Master of Ceremonies shall be filled by the respective vice or assistant. The office(s) thus vacated and any other vacancy shall be filled by electing a qualified local lodge member to serve for the balance of the term. A vacancy on the committee of Trustees shall be filled immediately by electing a new Trustee at the same meeting the vacancy is declared, to finish out the term.

Section 7 - Officer's Privileges shall be bestowed on a member after having served six months of the term for which elected, and further requires that the officer had attended a majority of meetings (or gave valid reason(s) for absence).

- A. The **Past Chairman Jewel** shall be bestowed on a member who has served a term as Chairman.
- B. The **degree of Past Chairman** and the right to wear the Past Chairman's Degree Jewel shall be bestowed on a member who has served for three consecutive years.
 1. As Vice Chairman, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Cultural Leader or Historian.
 2. In addition to the above, as the Assistant Recording Secretary, Master of Ceremonies or Assistant Master/Mistress of Ceremonies in Sweden.
- C. Past officer(s) transferring to another local lodge shall retain all previously earned privileges.

Section 8 - Negligence or Incompetence. The Chairman, in conjunction with the Trustees, may declare an office vacant, if:

- A. An officer neglects the duties of his/her office.
- B. An officer is absent three consecutive meetings without just cause.
- C. A motion from the floor claiming incompetence or neglect by an officer is duly presented and adopted.
- D. A vacancy shall be filled as in Section 6 above.

Section 9 - Installation of Officers. Installation of the duly elected officers of the local lodge shall take place as soon as possible in the term for which they have been elected. If the District Master, or District Deputy, is unable to be present to conduct the installation ceremonies, the Chairman shall appoint a Past Chairman of the local lodge to perform the ceremonies.

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Section 10 - Duties of the Officers.

All local lodge officers shall, at the end of their term, turn over all books, monies, papers, documents and property of the local lodge in their care to their respective successor or to such committee as the local lodge may designate.

A. The **Chairman** is the highest ranking officer of the local lodge, and shall:

1. Preside over all meetings of the lodge and supervise all activities within the lodge.
2. Be well familiar with the Constitution of the Order, and all other rules and regulations.
3. Make certain that the officers and members of various committees perform required duties.
4. Appoint committees as needed, except a nominating committee, which must be elected by the members.
5. Appoint officers to temporarily fill vacancies found at the roll call of officers, except the Inner and Outer Guard.
6. Cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie on any motion before the local lodge. The Chairman is not entitled to vote unless there is a tie.
7. Be entitled to vote during election of officers and when balloting of new member(s).
8. Submit to all rules and regulations of the Constitution and the bylaws of the district and local lodge.
9. At the end of the term, give a complete report to the local lodge of their accomplishments and make recommendations for future development and growth.

B. **The Vice Chairman** shall aid and assist the Chairman in maintaining order and decorum during the local lodge meetings, assume the duties of the Chairman in his/her absence, and shall:

1. Have special supervision over the Inner and Outer Guards, and the entrance to the lodge room.
2. Appoint officer(s) to temporarily fill vacancies found at roll call of Inner and/or Outer Guard.
3. Inspect the ballot box, prior to showing it to the Chairman, and when requested, verify the result of voting.

C. **The Recording Secretary** is the recording as well as the corresponding secretary of the lodge, and shall:

1. Keep and maintain careful and impartial records of all proceedings of the local lodge meetings.
2. Keep and maintain a complete list of all members of the local lodge, recording the:
 - a) Name, address, date of birth and initiation.
 - b) Assigned member number.
 - c) Office(s) held and year(s) served.

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- d) Date(s) member(s) resigned or were dropped for failure to pay established dues.
 3. Furnish the District Secretary with a complete list of all initiations, transfers, exclusions and such other information pertaining to membership as prescribed by the Constitution and the bylaws of the district and local lodge.
 4. Obtain all necessary information to prepare the Yearly Report and forward to the District Secretary no later than January 31.
 5. Be the custodian and sole user of the local lodge official seal. The seal shall be affixed to all official documents, letters and papers of the local lodge.
- D. **The Assistant Recording Secretary** shall assist and aid the Recording Secretary, and assume the duties of the Recording Secretary in his/her absence.
- E. **The Financial Secretary** receives all monies paid to the local lodge, and issues an official receipt for same, and shall:
1. Turn over all monies received to the treasurer at the close of each meeting.
 2. Issue an official Vasa Order of America Membership Card to each member at the time their dues are paid. This card shall serve as proof of active membership as well as serve as an official receipt for dues paid.
 3. Keep an accurate account of each member's payment of dues and assessments.
 4. Bill delinquent member(s) for past dues and assessments when three months in arrears.
 5. Report to the local lodge any action taken regarding member(s) over three months in arrears.
 6. Furnish necessary information for the Yearly Report to the Recording Secretary.
 7. Furnish a bond or security for the faithful performance of duties, as required by the local lodge, which shall pay the stipulated premium.
- F. **The Assistant Financial Secretary** shall assist and aid the Financial Secretary and assume the duties of the Financial Secretary in his/her absence.
- G. **The Treasurer** pays all bills of the local lodge, duly authorized for payment and shall:
1. Issue an official receipt to the Financial Secretary for all monies received.
 2. Deposit all monies received in accounts as ordered by the local lodge, and maintain complete and accurate records of income and expenditures.
 3. Maintain all accounts in good order, and be fully prepared for the year-end audit, review, or compilation.
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4. Furnish a bond or security for the faithful performance of duties, as required by the local lodge, which shall pay the required premium.
 5. Furnish all necessary information for the Yearly Report to the Recording Secretary and a complete and detailed term report at the end of each term or whenever requested by the local lodge.

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- H. **The Chaplain** shall perform all duties as prescribed by the Ritual of the Order.
- I. **The Master of Ceremonies** is in charge of regalia, song cards, and other property of the local lodge, and shall:
1. Prepare the lodge room for meeting, distribute regalia, song cards, etc., prior to the opening of the meeting.
 2. Have charge of the ballot box during balloting on candidate(s) for membership.
 3. Count votes at the time of voting on a motion, when requested by the Chairman.
 4. Perform all duties as prescribed by the Ritual of the Order.
- J. **The Assistant Master of Ceremonies** shall aid and assist the Master of Ceremonies at all local lodge meetings, and assume the duties of the Master of Ceremonies in his/her absence.
- K. **The Inner Guard** has charge of the door to the lodge room, and shall:
1. Receive the Local Lodge password or other proof of membership in the Vasa Order from person(s) wishing to enter the lodge room after opening of the meeting, and shall seat late arrivals.
 2. Obtain permission from the Vice Chairman prior to permitting anyone to enter the lodge room after the formal opening of the meeting.
- L. **The Outer Guard** shall aid and assist the Inner Guard and perform such duties as prescribed by the Ritual of the Order.
- M. **The Past Chairman** shall assist and advise the Chairman. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, assume the office of Chairman and perform all duties as prescribed by the Ritual of the Order.
- N. **The Cultural Leader** shall be responsible exclusively for cultural activities. Such activities as social events, refreshments, etc., shall be the duty of a committee for such events and be strictly separated from duties of the Cultural Leader. The Cultural Leader shall:
1. Aim to interest members in cultural activities.
 2. Utilize the Cultural Leader's Resource Book as a reference in generating cultural programs within the lodge and maintain it with such information as may be received from the Grand Lodge Cultural Directors.
 3. Supervisor programs emanating from the District and G.L. Cultural Directors to be implemented on the local lodge level.
- O. **The Trustees** shall have general supervision over all business and financial activities of the local lodge and shall:
1. Have supervision over all bonds, stocks, shares and other property belonging to the lodge.
 2. Ascertain that all monies are deposited in designated funds.
 3. Make certain bonds or sureties are furnished by officers as required by the Constitution, district and local lodge bylaws. Such bonds or sureties shall be in the custody of the chairman of the Trustees.

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4. Exchange, deposit or transfer all monies or property of the local lodge as voted by a two-thirds vote during a lodge meeting.
 5. Furnish all necessary information for the Yearly Reports to the Recording Secretary.
 6. Be present at the auditing meeting to ascertain that all funds and securities of the lodge are properly placed according to the record of proceedings and bylaws. Examine all bank books and bank statements.
 7. Report findings at the auditing meeting during the officer's annual reports to the local lodge.
 8. Submit a written, complete report of the financial status and activities of the lodge at the end of each term. The report shall include an inventory of all property of the lodge, and where items of value are kept for safekeeping.
 9. Perform all other duties as requested by the lodge.
- P. **The Auditors** shall at the end of each term or more often if requested by the lodge, audit, review, or compile all local lodge accounts and shall:
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1. Be present, if possible, at all meetings of the local lodge to examine and approve all bills received.
 2. Perform all other duties as requested by the lodge.
- Q. **The Local Lodge Historian** shall:
1. Keep and maintain a local lodge history book to include photos of all important and interesting events concerning the lodge, identifying all persons, places and dates.
 2. Obtain a copy of all reports and minutes of the local lodge and extract items which are of historical value.
 3. Present a written report to the lodge at the end of the term.
 4. Forward to the District Historian a summary of pertinent information along with any photos which could be of historical value.
 5. Turn over the history book and all files to their successor.
- R. **All other officers elected** in accordance with the bylaws of the lodge shall perform duties as the position may require or as determined by the lodge.

ARTICLE V – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Sunshine Committee. The composition, number of members and specific duties shall be provided for in the local lodge bylaws.

Section 2 - Membership Committee. A committee of three local lodge members shall be elected concurrent with election of officers. Members of this committee shall visit and offer encouragement to delinquent members of the lodge and make necessary arrangements for group initiation(s).

Section 3 - Media Committee. A committee of at least two local lodge members shall be elected or appointed during the first meeting in the month of January. Members of this committee shall obtain press exposure for the lodge in newspapers and other publications (Swedish or Nordic in nature) circulation in the local lodge neighborhood.

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Section 4 - Archive Committee. A committee of at least two local lodge members, of whom one shall be the Local Lodge Historian, shall be appointed during the first meeting in the month of January. Members of his/her committee shall sort and file the local lodge documents in a way that ensures complete safety.

ARTICLE VI – DUES, FEES, PER CAPITA TAX

Section 1 - Application Fee. Each person who seeks membership in The Vasa Order of America shall pay one dollar application fee at the time of submitting their application for membership. This fee shall be part of the initiation fee.

Section 2 - Initiation Fee. Each person seeking membership in the Vasa Order of America shall pay a minimum of ten dollars as an initiation fee prior to initiation. As a benefit from this fee the person, on being initiated, shall receive the Vasa Order of America Handbook containing, as a minimum, the latest version of the Constitution, in three parts, the Local Lodge Ritual, and the Instruction Manual.

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Section 3 - Membership Dues shall be paid in advance in the amount stipulated by the local lodge.

Section 4 - Funeral Fund Dues shall be paid as stipulated by the district lodge.

Section 5 - Special Fund Dues shall be paid to the Grand Lodge as follows:

- A. All members in the United States and Canada shall pay dues to the Old Age and Benefit Fund as stipulated in the G.L. Const. - Art. 9, Sec. 1.
- B. All members in the United States and Canada shall pay dues to the Educational Fund as stipulated in the G.L. Const. - Art. 9, Sec. 2.

Section 6 - Per Capita Tax as established by the Grand Lodge and the District Lodge shall be forwarded to the District Secretary immediately following the last meeting of the calendar year.

Section 7 - Exemption from payment of per capita tax shall be granted to local lodges instituted during the last three months of the calendar year.

Section 8 - Dues, Taxes, Fines and etc. shall be paid on or before the due-date(s) in order for member(s) to remain in good standing.

Section 9 - Penalty for Delinquency. Prior to taking action on the suspension or expulsion of a member for failure to pay the stipulated dues and fees, the local lodge must notify the member in writing, at least fifteen days in advance of the scheduled meeting for such action.

- A. **Suspension.** A member three months in arrears shall be suspended at the first regular meeting of the following month effective on that date.
 - 1. A suspended member forfeits all rights, benefits and privileges in the local, district and Grand Lodge, including serving out an elected term of office.
 - 2. A suspended member participating in a district funeral benefit fund shall be governed by the district lodge bylaws.
 - 3. The suspension is lifted and all rights and privileges are restored after the suspended member has fulfilled their financial obligations.

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B. **Expulsion.** A suspended member, neglecting to fulfill financial obligations to the lodge within four months of the date of suspension, shall be expelled from the Vasa Order of America at the next regular meeting of the local lodge.

1. In extraordinary circumstances, the lodge may grant a reprieve of **not more than one month** for a total of five months from the date of suspension.
2. A majority of votes cast must favor the one month extension.

C. A member reported ill or otherwise incapacitated **must not be suspended** for failure to meet financial obligations.

ARTICLE VII – BENEFIT FUNDS

Section 1 - Sick Benefit Fund. Local lodges may maintain a sick benefit fund for its members.

- A. Applicant to an established sick benefit fund shall be fifty years of age or less at the time of application.
- B. Yearly sick benefits must be equal to or greater than the yearly dues for fund members.
- C. Sick benefits must be paid to all members of the fund who maintain membership in good standing, regardless of place of residence.

Section 2 - Funeral Benefit Fund. A member belonging to a local lodge sick benefit fund may also belong to a funeral benefit fund, maintained by the district lodge.

- A. A stipulated funeral benefit shall be paid for a deceased member by the district lodge to deceased member's local lodge. The local lodge, in turn, is responsible for payment of the funeral benefit to the estate of legal heir(s) of the deceased member.
- B. A member in good standing of a funeral benefit fund, may, upon written request, withdraw from the fund without loss of any rights and/or privileges of membership in other funds of the Grand, district or local lodge.
- C. Local lodges shall be permitted to organize their own funeral benefit fund, provided there are no obligations to either the district or Grand Lodge. A two-thirds vote is necessary for adoption of a motion to organize a funeral benefit fund in the local lodge, and all members must be notified in sufficient time prior to voting.

ARTICLE VIII – FUNDS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

The local lodge may establish, maintain, and use funds for special purposes.

Contributions to each fund must be voluntary. Assets of a fund shall not be diverted to purposes unrelated to the purpose of the fund. Assets of a fund may revert to the lodge general fund if the lodge terminates the fund.

If a lodge establishes a corporation, its incorporation articles shall name the local lodge, the district lodge, and the Grand Lodge as primary benefactors if the corporation dissolves.

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ARTICLE IX – LOCAL LODGE SEAL

An Official Seal shall be issued to each local lodge for the exclusive use of the Recording Secretary of the lodge. The name and number of the lodge, the date of institution and the Local Lodge Emblem must appear on the seal.

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ARTICLE X – CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH CLUBS

Children’s and Youth Clubs shall be under the direction of a leader approved and/or appointed by the District Youth Supervisor.

1. The club leader may appoint assistant leaders.
2. The club leader shall submit an annual report to the District Youth Supervisor on club activities.
3. Club membership is open to the children of Vasa members as well as other children of Nordic ancestry.
 - A. **Children’s Club:** between the ages of three and fourteen at the discretion of the club leader/supervisor.
 - B. **Youth Club:** between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one and member(s) may remain active until their twenty-fifth birthday.

ARTICLE XI – ACCOUNTS AND BENEFITS

Section 1 - Financial Term shall be January 1 through December 31 (the calendar year) unless otherwise specified in local lodge bylaws.

Section 2 - Financial Term Report shall be executed on an official form furnished by the Grand Secretary. One copy is to be mailed to the District Secretary by January 31, and one copy is for local lodge files.

- A. If the financial term does not coincide with the calendar year, the financial part of the official report shall cover the Fiscal Year of the lodge and the membership report to December of the preceding year.
- B. **The Official Yearly Report** shall be filled out by the Recording Secretary, reviewed and signed by the Chairman, the Recording Secretary and the Auditors of the local lodge.

ARTICLE XII – VIOLATIONS, GRIEVANCES and HEARINGS

Section 1 - Violations/Grievances. A Vasa member who at any time or anywhere disrupts the operation and/or dishonors the character or reputation of the Vasa Order of America, or any of its members, or violates the Constitution, bylaws or regulations of the Order, shall be held responsible to his/her own local lodge.

- A. The letter of complaint against the Vasa Brother or Sister must:
 1. Specify the nature of the violation or grievance.
 2. State the time and place (when applicable).
 3. Be signed by Vasa member(s) in good standing in the Order.
 4. Be presented to the Recording Secretary of the accused member’s local lodge.
- B. The recording secretary shall, immediately upon receipt, read the letter of complaint to the members at a regular meeting of the lodge.
 1. The accusation may be resolved at the meeting it is being read to the lodge, or,

CONSTITUTION FOR LOCAL LODGE

2. An investigating committee of five members shall be selected, of which three shall be selected by the local lodge and two by the accused member.
3. The committee shall meet immediately following the lodge meeting to select a chairman and secretary, and decide upon the time and place to hear arguments by the accused as well as the accuser.

Section 2 - Hearing. The accuser and the accused shall be notified of time and place of the hearing by registered mail, with a request for each to produce witnesses and documents pertinent to the case. A copy of the written complaint must be included in the notification of the hearing.

- A. The secretary of the investigating committee shall keep careful and complete records of the proceedings of committee meetings.
- B. Upon completion of the hearing(s), the investigating committee must turn over all records of meeting(s) to the local lodge with a recommendation for action by the lodge, either by:
 1. Dismissal of charges,
 2. Warning,
 3. Suspension for a fixed period of time, or
 4. Expulsion from the Local Lodge.
- C. The local lodge must vote on the recommendation(s) by the investigating committee at a regular meeting of the lodge immediately following receipt of the committee's recommendation(s).
 1. Dismissal of charges or a warning requires a majority vote for passage.
 2. Suspension for a fixed period of time or expulsion from the Local Lodge require two-thirds vote for passage.
 3. Failure of the accused to appear at the hearing (without valid reason), directs the committee to submit a written report in accordance therewith, to the lodge. Without permitting any deliberation on the matter the chairman of the local lodge shall declare the accused separated from the local lodge.
 4. The Recording Secretary of the lodge shall immediately notify the accused and the accuser of the lodge's decision, by registered mail.
 5. Decision of the local lodge is final.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS

Local Lodges shall specify rules for amending their own bylaws with minimal requirements that the proposal shall:

1. Be read at one meeting and a copy sent to all members prior to the next business meeting at which time the vote may be taken.
2. Require two-thirds vote for passage.
3. Become effective upon approval of district lodge or its executive board.

CONCLUSION

The Constitution of the Vasa Order of America includes the Articles of Incorporation, the Articles of Agreement, the General Rules of the Order, the Constitution for Grand Lodge, the Constitution for District Lodge, the Constitution for Local Lodge and this Conclusion. This revised edition of the Constitution of the Vasa Order of America was duly adopted at the 37th Grand Lodge Convention held in Washington, D.C., July 3 – 8, 2010.

All previous issues having regulation in conflict with those in this Constitution are herewith null and void.

Neither the Grand Lodge, district lodges or local lodges, branches or divisions, nor individual members of the Vasa Order of America shall have the right to make any change(s) whatsoever herein without due process of amendments.

December 7, 2010

(Signed) William L. Lundquist
Grand Master

(Signed) Joan Lindquist Graham
Grand Secretary

Note: Changes made in 2010 are marked – Rev. July 2010
Additions made in 2010 are marked – July 2010

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