

WEBMASTER'S REPORT TO THE 2019 DISTRICT SIX CONVENTION:

Last year's report covered the history of our District 6 web presence, and touched upon the IT structure that exists supporting our operation but not on-line. Most of these external processes are done without inclusion in our by-laws, and no formal documentation. For those interested, they are included in earlier reports on our D6 member's web site at <http://www.vasaorder.net/newsletters.cfm?lodge=D6> . The reports are available for view by our members for research as well as by the public for information about us, and contact.

Prior reports have stressed the importance of our calendar of events. It is crucial that our events be made visible to our membership at large, and to the public as appropriate. You, the members of local lodges and officers of the district need to continue to send me information on events, with flyers if available to be posted on our district and park calendars. Local lodges also need to post them on their own websites as well, and remember to remove them after the event. Posting of stale news is worse than no posting at all.

Our opt-in group mail list was also mentioned. If you are not included, send me an email to join the list. You can drop out later if you wish to, and as stated earlier, you will NOT get on spammer's lists as a result, since the "to" list is always hidden.

1. Vasaorder.com Redesign status:

As you know, the new responsive version of Vasaorder.com has been released, and is now our official site. Extensive testing has resulted in finding the inevitable bugs, and fixing them, as well as fine tuning the on-line admin process. I thank members of our district for their help in serving as system testers on the project. Dawna Renne worked from the beginning on the district and local site parts, reporting bugs with excellent documentation. Evald R. Eskilson (Lodge Vågen) and Lynne Roemer (Lodge Dalahäst) who signed on to administrators for their local site also discovered and reported issues that required fixes. All reported issues were corrected in a timely manner. My thanks to these Pioneers of district six, as well as others within the order for their help with this rollout.

The primary goal of the redesign was to make the site "responsive", (able to display properly on any device from cell phone to large scale monitor. The result has been well received.

Districts and Local Lodges will now be able to update their own contact lists using administrator screens no more complex than sending an email or composing a document.

A call has gone out for districts and local lodges to request login credentials to sign in and update their own data. This will result in much more current posting of officer lists after elections.

2. Transition:

Our new responsive vasaorder.com site includes all of the former structure plus many enhancements. Districts and local lodges will have much more control over their data.

The design specification for the outsourced programming support originally defined Vasaorder.com and Vasaorder.net (our template for local lodges) as separate efforts, with only the conversion to responsive format for the latter, since local administrative data management was already a part of the structure. The conversion of the national site provided many new

features, and expanded the local lodge content to a great extent, questioning the need for a separate sub-site.

Since the new site was actually built from the ground up using both the former site and the design specification as a guide, there are actually some internal differences, (a different database manager, a much newer release of the core programming language, and residence of the site in the "cloud" rather than on the older server). That makes bridge programming to automate transfer of content from Vasaorder.net to the local lodges within the new Vasaorder.com much more difficult.

Since there have been few volunteers as administrators for district and local lodges so far, much of the site remains untested. The former site has been renamed Vasaorder.org, and is still live. It will remain in place until the new Vasaorder.com has been fully tested and accepted by our membership. The two releases are cross linked from their home pages.

For our district, Dawna will initially serve as administrator and will update the District 6 contact list.

(I will then post the information on the legacy (old) site, as I have done in the past.)

Our district and ten of our twelve local lodges currently have sites supported by vasaorder.net. For those local lodges, there will need to be a transition from vasaorder.net to the monolithic support of the new vasaorder.com for lodges and districts currently using the template.

The immediate solution for moving the already posted data, (Calendar, Newsletter, News, and Photo Gallery) would be to open the old site and the admin panel of the new site simultaneously and copy / past where applicable, download and reload elsewhere. I will continue to pursue an alternate (simpler) method to achieve the transition, and will help any who sign up as administrators to the greatest extent possible.

For other local lodges throughout the Order, especially those with no local web site of their own, please appoint a data administrator, (no programming skills needed, only a connection to the internet) to maintain the data content within vasaorder.com for your lodge.

Overall, the redesigned site will be much better organized and documented since it has essentially been built from the ground up based on the design requirements we provided. This will make future maintenance and enhancement much easier than before for me or my successors.

For now, help is needed. Please, consider signing up as administrator for your local lodge. With the credentials I assign for you, I will send appropriate instructions for access to the admin pages, (The beginnings of a "tutorial" section for the process)

I could also use help in composing and editing the content of the tutorial on-line booklet. Anyone out there with tech writing skills, (or a desire to develop them)?

Questions from the floor welcome!

In Truth and Unity,
Bob Anderson
Webmaster, NJ District Six