



THE VASA STAR

VASASTJÄRNAN

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Norway runs frequent and fast ferry services across Fjords to transport passengers and cars—also an excellent way to explore the Fjords and the views. A visit to Geirangerfjord. /p6-7



MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND MASTER

DEAR VASA MEMBERS,

This will be my last Grand Lodge message in the Vasa Star. The last four years have been different for all members of the Order. At this time a few lodges have opened to all in person meetings including Conventions. Others are having Zoom meetings.

I have been always thinking about how well our cultural programs and events are and if Sweden was aware of us? Therefore, with assistance from District 9 member Arne Dunhem an appointment was made with the Swedish Ambassador, Karin Olofsdotter. Nancy and I boarded a

train (train broke down enroute) and arrived one hour late in Washington D.C. Had a nice meeting and my questions were answered in a positive way.

The Ambassador said that we are perceived by Sweden as being a great
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National Archive News

A new exhibition on loan from the Swedish American Museum in Chicago just opened at the archive. / p3

Grand Lodge News

Essays by three young 2021 scholarship recipients - a reminder of the importance of thinking of future members / p4-7

Local Lodge News

Our favorite time of the year continues to be different from ever before but here's to catching up with friends all over the U.S. / p8

Årets Svensk-Amerikan

The 2020 Swedish American of the Year was in Luleå to be celebrated and receive an honorary doctorate. / p11

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



DEAR READERS,
Spring is here
and with it
warmer days,
abundant flowers,
and the
prospect of happy times in
the great outdoors.

After all that's gone on in the world, I'm thankful for winter to be over. Everyone seems ready to get out and get together. This last weekend, my family had an indoor, in person, event for the first time in over two years. Like many of our Lodges it was so exciting to see everyone. Probably the biggest surprise was to learn that my culinary talented sister didn't know how to make Swedish Pancakes! I'm still shocked to even type that. My dad, who taught me in my early teens, had organized this cooking get-together to teach the next generation, his grandchildren, the invaluable art of pancake making. Imagine our surprise when both kids admitted they had never even had a Swedish pancake. Suddenly, we had an army of cooks learning how to make the batter, flip large cakes and make others in the smaller plattar pan.

As the frying progressed, I regaled them with fond memories of cooking at the Swedish Club in Ballard. In college I would get up early to begin making pancakes for their monthly fundraiser. If memory serves, it was a

5:00 am start! I was always a flipper and they let me cook upstairs where you could get more than a dozen cakes on the extra large grill top. It definitely kept you busy preventing any of them from burning. In addition to the thrill of preventing the impending doom of blackened pancakes, I had the fun of cooking with my friend Nga. I met Nga while working for a temp agency. She grew up in Vietnam and we bonded over sharing our cultural heritages. I went to the International District with her for authentic Bahn Mi and to her Vietnamese hairdresser for one of the most beautiful hair cuts of my life. After coming to a pancake breakfast with me, she decided she had to learn how to make them. We had a blast cooking together until I moved away from Seattle. After I left, she kept right on cooking for the Swedish Club. Such is the power of the pancake.

Sharing Vasa with others, or as our Grand Lodge Chairman says Talking Vasa, remains as relevant today as it did for me almost 20 years ago. What an opportunity to engage with the world by sharing who we are as we learn about others. What a way to ensure that both we and our Lodges experience new growth as the years progress..

IN TRUTH AND UNITY,
CHRISTA SVENSSON

Vasa questions?

You're welcome to send your questions about anything
Vasa-related to vasajlg@aol.com

Submit Material to
vasaeditor@gmail.com

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS



What my lodge and heritage means to me. / p6



Höganäs No. 634 contributes to a local student heading to Seattle. / p12



Grand Lodge Scholarship essays on a gift to humanity by a Swedish company, what belonging to a lodge can mean and a visit to Norway. / p5-7

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a memorial donation

Send your donations to:
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Family Tree Släktutredningar

I am a member of the Vasa Order in Sweden and an expert in Swedish genealogy. Over the years I have helped many Vasa members to find their roots in Sweden.

If you want my help to find your Swedish ancestors, please email me for further information: swedengen@telia.com

ARCHIVES NEWS

A message from the president of Vasa National Archives

DEAR FELLOW VASA MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE VASA NATIONAL ARCHIVES,

The response of Vasa members and our local and district lodges has been wonderful. The VNA has raised the matching funds for the ISHRAB grant and we await the grant decision. The VNA faces many challenges in the coming years so we appreciate your continuing support. We are returning to a normal schedule and have a great exhibit for the summer. The Archives continues to seek funding for projects and will continue to

find opportunities to improve our collection and presentation.

With Grand Lodge almost here a small reminder that any members who have items of history that would make good additions to the Archives. I think of this when I speak to a member who proudly describes receiving her 60 year membership pin this year. Many of our longtime members have historical items related to their time in a local lodge or district. If you have something that you believe has possible value, write a short descrip-

tion on its origin and let Kathy Cuff know.

If we do not see you in Bishop Hill, we hope to see you in Philadelphia for the Grand Lodge Convention. Please stay safe, stay healthy and travel with caution for this year. You can see a Lilly Setterdahl exhibit starting now at the Archives.

I ask that you remember lost members and support the Heritage Fund of the Vasa National Archives. We hope to share our mission, accomplishments, and challenges with you

at the Grand Lodge Convention in July.

On behalf of the VNA we wish all members of the Order and their loved ones a wonderful spring, as we welcome summer.

IN TRUTH AND UNITY,
BRUCE ELFVIN
PRESIDENT VASA NATIONAL ARCHIVES



GREETINGS VASA SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

It's not very often when a traveling exhibit from another institution allows us the opportunity to add Vasa items to the exhibit and highlight our collections within the traveling exhibit. That has recently happened with the Documenting America's Swedish Immigrants on loan from the Swedish-American Museum in Chicago. The exhibit discusses the efforts of Lennart Setterdahl to preserve our Swedish-American/Canadian heritage.

Lennart Setterdahl travelled across the US and Canada microfilming Swedish-American/Canadian newspapers, church records, organizational records, business records, and more. He also interviewed nearly 3,000 Swedish-Americans and took 20,000 photos of people and places. According to Lilly Setterdahl, shortly after moving to the Cleveland, OH Lennart wanted to know what happened to all the Swedes that immigrated to the US. Thanks to grants and contracts with various institutions, Lennart spent the next 30 years tracking down the answer to this mystery.

The Vasa National Archive will host Documenting America's Swedish Immigrants until

the end of October 2022. The exhibit features various interviews, honors bestowed on Lennart, his microfilming and interviewing efforts. Additional exhibited materials include the "transcriber" Lilly used to transcribe his interviews, some of the microfilms created for the VOA in the 1980s and 90s, and non-fiction works created from Lennart's microfilms and interviews.

We plan to have a Closing Reception and Gallery Talk in October. We'll let you know the date and time when it is confirmed.

IN TRUTH AND UNITY,
KATHY CUFF, MANAGER-ARCHIVIST VASA NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Schedule of events

Midsummer Respite (June 25, 10 – 4, during Midsummer) If you get too hot or dry while exploring Bishop Hill during this summer celebration, the Vasa National Archives invites you to take a break and enjoy fika with us. Fika is a Swedish custom of offering visitors a drink and a snack. To help pass the time while you cool off, we have a make-and-take clay sculpture station for you. Call 309-927-3898 or email VasaArchivist@gmail.com for more information.

Butter Making (Sept. 24-25, 10 – 5, during Jordbruksdagarna) Bishop Hill colonists, like many Swedes, were excellent butter and cheese makers. Stop by our booth in the Demonstration area to learn about butter making and make your own butter to take home. Call 309-927-3898 or email VasaArchivist@gmail.com for more information.

Bargain Hunter Weekend (Oct. 14-16) Come celebrate the bounty of fall in Bishop Hill as various stores, museums and restaurants offer special discounts, events, and activities. Collect signatures from 6 businesses or museums and be entered for a gift basket drawing at the Colony Store. Call 309-927-3898 or email VasaArchivist@gmail.com for more information.

Don't miss the archive's current exhibition on Lennart Setterdahl's work to document America's Swedish Immigrants.

Vasa Star – Article & Picture Submission Guidelines

Submit articles in a format that ENHANCES FUTURE events.

Please submit articles that enhance future events. Your 150-200 word article should include information about events that will take place within 60 days after the issue's deadline or within the next 90-180 days. There is nothing wrong with covering events more than once; big events such as milestone anniversaries and convention dates can be announced a year or more in advance.

Submit pictures of SUCCESSFUL PAST events, include names for captions.

Submitted photos should represent past events, with a caption describing the event, and naming the people in the picture. It is not necessary for readers to know if your meeting was on a Saturday or a Thursday, or if it was on the 10th or the 11th of a month. Lodges typically submit 1-2 pictures (you can send more, and we will select the best ones, but we can never guarantee they will all be published). Please submit in jpg-format for best quality.

Submit to: vasaeditor@gmail.com or Vasa Star • PO Box 13331 • New Berlin WI 53151-0632

GRAND LODGE NEWS

The Grand Master's Message (continued from page 1)

asset for delivering the message of Swedish cultural and keeping it alive. The Ambassador will give us a letter stating that. This was something I

always thought about. The Ambassador has been invited to our Grand Lodge Convention this year and will try to attend or her second in com-

mand will attend and speak. I believe the meeting was very encouraging to the Order.

Do not wait to make your Convention Hotel reservations. We have a block of rooms reserved at a very discounted price. Call the Marriott directly using the code: VASA GRAND LODGE CONVENTION. CALL: USA & CA 1-888-236-2427, and Sweden 020 795122. The Convention web site can be reached from the vasaorder.com or directly at vasagrandlodge2022.com.

Convention Registration: Everyone attending must fill out the Registration form and fee is \$30USD, even only attending the free events.

A bus trip is scheduled to New Jersey Vasa Park (largest Vasa Park in the Order). Guests will receive Fika on arrival, and later a lunch provided by Vasa Park Ladies Auxiliary. Enjoy swimming in our extra-large pool, don't forget your bathing suit.

Complementary/memorable Vasa Park towels will be given to you to use and take home. Also enjoy strolling around the park sipping a cold refreshment.

I have just returned from New Jersey DL 6 Convention, the first in three years. It was well attended, and the new District Master is one of youngest we have seen. Another first for NJ is that the three members of the Executive Board are all Ladies along with the Vice District Master. Not counting Treasurer and Secretary also Ladies. WOW!

Remember the Order needs a **VI-BRANT, ENTHUSIASTIC MEMBERSHIP – GET THE WORD OUT! TV TV TV** (Talk Vasa) with ENTHUSIASM! Nothing in the world has ever been accomplished without ENTHUSIASM. "A person who lacks enthusiasm never develops it in another. But a person who is enthusiastic soon has enthusiastic followers". We need to think about this!

Looking forward to seeing you in Philadelphia.

The Grand Master meeting with Swedish Ambassador, Karin Olofsdotter.



IN MEMORIAM

Memorial Notices should be mailed with check or money order to The Vasa Star, PO Box 510632, New Berlin, WI 53151-0632. Email: vasaeditor@gmail.com. The fee is \$10=max. 40-45 words, and \$25= longer obituaries of 50-120 words. All notices must be typed and in a format similar to what you see here. NO newspaper clippings.

If you submitted an obituary and it is not listed here, please resubmit to be included in the following issue.

CALIFORNIA

LILLIAN HOGLUND, Our beloved member of North Star Lodge, Lillian Hoglund passed away on December 17, 2021, in Woodland Hills, California at the age of 97 years old. Lillian joined North Star Lodge No. 106 on March 5, 1968. Lillian was very active in NSL until some years ago and had a position as Financial Secretary. Lillian was born in Los Angeles and is survived by her son Chris. All her friends in North Star Lodge will miss her greatly.

IVAN JOHNSON, age 84, was born September 25, 1937, in San Francisco, California, and passed away December 4, 2021, at his home. He was a member of both Jenny Lind Lodge No. 388 and Balder No. 343. Ivan loved to travel. He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

MARRA POISE SWAN, passed away January 2, 2022 in Roseville, CA. Born on September 17, 1936 in Michigan City, IN, the fourth of seven children. Marra transferred to Sierra Kronan Lodge No. 737 in March of 2016, finding her niche in our crafting group and serving as Chaplain. She will be remembered for her creativity and always cheerful demeanor.

OHIO

INGRID HINES (nee Carlson) September 20, 1937 - February 27, 2022. Ingrid joined Nobel-Monitor Lodge No. 130 on January 1, 2009. In addition to a successful

career at IBM, she enjoyed growing dahlias. She is survived by a son, a daughter, grand and great grandchildren.

TEXAS

JOHN OLSSON of Carl XVI Gustaf Lodge No. 716, Dallas Texas passed away peacefully February 2022 at T. Boone Pickens Hospice Center from pneumonia. A fun loving member, he will be greatly missed. Rest in peace dear friend.

WISCONSIN

LES TOUVE, May 26, 1928 - March 03, 2022 passed away after a short time in the hospital. He was a long-time Linde Lodge No. 492 member since April 1973. When he rolled up his sleeves, he got to work for the Good of the Order. Positions in Linde and DLLM8. We miss you Les.

Moving?

Be sure to send address changes to:

circulationvasastar
@gmail.com

Grand Lodge Scholarship Essays

by Benjamin Kramer

What Nordic invention appeals to you in being most important to mankind and why have you selected this?



In 1959, Swedish automotive giant Volvo unveiled its newest, most alluring safety feature yet: the three-point seatbelt. Consisting of a band at the waist and two bands over the upper body, the newfangled contraption was promised to be hundreds of times more effective at keeping passengers inside a vehicle after a collision than its single-strap predecessors. The three-point concept from the 1960s might seem familiar; the design has changed only minimally since Nils Bohlin devised it in his first year as the leader of Volvo's Automotive Safety Department.

Bohlin, born in Västernorrland in 1920, had spent the most part of the previous decade at Saab, fine-tuning the designs of ejection seats, intended to rescue pilots from high-speed military aircraft. Upon arriving at Volvo in 1958, Bohlin sought to invent a seatbelt at once comfortable, nonintrusive, and aesthetically pleasing. By 1963,

the design had proved so popular and effective that, in the interest of international safety, Bohlin generously made the decision to permit Volvo to share his designs for the seatbelt freely so that it could be adopted and refined by automotive manufacturers all around the world.

The successful inventor was lauded widely for his contributions to the field of safety control, going on to receive major awards from the United States National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 1985, the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences in 1995, and the U.S. National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2002—and for good reason. According to studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the seatbelt has decreased the risk of fatal injuries by somewhere between 50 and 60 percent, and more than half of fatal crash victims in the United States were

found not to have been wearing the state-mandated seatbelt at the time of the collision.

But the value of the three-point seatbelt goes far beyond the hard, cold numbers. Each crash victim saved by Bohlin's handy invention is somebody's daughter, son, mother, father, spouse, grandparent, friend, or coworker, whose loss would have been a crushing blow to his or her loved ones. The collective trauma avoided, and the value of the lives saved by these three polyester straps are inestimable. Hundreds of thousands of people who would be dead if not for the seatbelt are still alive today, thanks to Nils Bohlin. Almost equally important is the sense of comfort that a seatbelt brings. As you merge onto the highway, you know that, in the worst-case scenario, you at least have some protection from the rush of metal.

It is surprising that we don't learn

more about Nils Bohlin, having created such an invention almost as ubiquitous as Edison's lightbulb. In spite of his contributions to safety all around the world, Bohlin preferred to stay out of the limelight. Seeing himself as a small-town-born mechanical engineer who simply fulfilled the task given to him as the head of his department, Bohlin did not seek out international fame or lobby for the awards that he won over the course of his life. Encyclopedia articles on Bohlin are short and vague, and today, the man is probably best remembered by his four children and thirteen grandchildren.

And thus, Bohlin, continuing in the tradition of Swedish innovation championed by Alfred Nobel, has become the nameless, faceless, incredibly influential inventor behind the omnipresent three-point seatbelt that has saved countless lives. It is an achievement to stay humble and gracious when people all over the world don't think twice before entrusting their lives to your creation. He is buried by a small church in Ramfall, in Östergötland. More people should visit his grave.

Benjamin Kramer
Linde Lodge No. 492
DL Lake Michigan No. 8

Ben is studying at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut where he is a member of the Scandinavian Society. Future plans include a master's degree and eventually working as an educator of music and language. Ben worked as a language teacher and counselor at Sjolunden, Concordia Language Village virtual camp in 2020 and was instrumental in starting a virtual "Camp Sjolunden". Ben also worked as volunteer course contributor and forum moderator for the popular language education platform Duolingo where his work has allowed him to directly impact 1.2 million people learning Swedish through this platform. Ben is an active member in his local Vasa Lodge where he has and continues to serve as a leader of the children's activities. Ben is dedicated to his Vasa work in preserving and promoting our culture and heritage.

Describe your local Vasa lodge and how it has played a role in your life.

by Hannah Zabe

As a Swedish-American my family has kept our heritage alive by joining various Swedish Organizations, celebrating holiday traditions, and making and eating authentic Swedish foods. The Vasa Order of America has always been a part of my life and quite honestly, has been the best thing that I have been a part of.

As a toddler, I was first introduced to Vasa by becoming a member of Barnklubben Elsa Rix, the first Children's Club in the Vasa Order of America. I was given one of my older sister's authentic folk-dance dresses and was taught by the older kids and leaders the wonderful dances we all look forward to performing. This started me on my journey to becoming St. Lucia, a rite of passage for every Swedish girl. I started out this first year as a Tomte and worked my way through the ranks. While we traveled from New Jersey to Long Island on Friday nights, we used this family time to practice singing in Swedish as well as any speaking parts we might have for upcoming Installations and Lucia pageants. We also used this time to learn about my family's Swedish history from my Mormor and Morfar who would sometimes attend with us. In 2019 through hard work and dedication, I was honored to be the 99th Lucia in the club's history.

At the age of 14, I became a member of Lodge Olympic, a Swedish American Fraternal Organization. We gather, enjoy fellowship and the youth give cultural reports. The cultural reports are a great way for the teenagers to work on our public speaking, writing, and research skills as well as communication which will help us in college and adulthood. During our meetings we learn about upcoming events that we can attend, how we can support fellow lodges, as well as learning about different customs, traditions and interesting facts from some of the Swedes that are in our lodge. We also do fun things like learning to knit and crafting and going to the theater to name a few.

In 2019 I was awarded the Grand Lodge scholarship to attend Concordia's Swedish Language Village - Sjolunden - in Bemidji, Minnesota. During the summer of July and Au-

gust, I attended this fully immersive language and cultural program which taught me the Swedish language and culture in a small village of traditional svenska stugor, resembling a small fishing village. While attending Concordia, I met many kids my age from around the United States who share the same love of our Swedish heritage. What an amazing 2 weeks we had not only getting to know each other but learning about our Swedish heritage, customs, culture, and language. My small Scandinavian circle has grown and we all have kept in contact with each other.

I was accepted to the University of Pittsburgh - Greensburg, BSN nursing program. While at U Pitt-Greensburg, I will be minoring in Swedish as well as joining the Fikaklubb club. The Fikaklubb is for students who are interested in Scandinavian languages, cultures, and customs and participate in events and conversations relevant to the Scandinavian countries. I also will be looking into joining the Scandinavian Society of Western PA and the Scandinavian Folk dancers of Pittsburgh as well as keeping my membership to Lodge Olympic .

If it weren't for Barnklubben Elsa Rix, Olympic Lodge as well as the District and Grand lodges I would not have been afforded the amazing opportunities I have had in the Scandinavian community as well as the amazing lifelong friendships I have made.

Hannah Zabe
Olympic Lodge No. 235
DL New York No. 4

Hannah and her family have a long history of involvement in The Vasa Order of America. She joined Barnklubben Elsa Rix at age three and has performed in countless Midsummer and Lucia events. She joined Olympic Lodge at age fourteen and has served as Lucia, been extremely active in her lodge, and served on installation teams for local lodges as well as her District Lodge. Hannah's future plans include completing her degree in Nursing from The University of Pittsburgh and to work in a Children's Hospital

Geirangerfjord, Norway

by Matthew Cleveland

The natural and historic beauty of the Nordic countries is unmatched, and millions of tourists flock to the region each year just to get a glimpse. One of the most popular destinations is the Geirangerfjord in western Norway with its breathtaking cliffs and waterfalls. The visible enchantment of Geirangerfjord is obvious, but there is more to its appeal than what meets the eye. Historic farms sit on the edges of the peaceful fjord and coupled with the beautiful cliffs it is easy to see its inspiration for an iconic Disney movie. Yet in those same cliffs a dangerous threat lies in wait, a slow-moving and silent menace which threatens the destruction of the villages onshore the tranquil fjord below.

The Geirangerfjord area has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2005, which means it has international protection for its historical, scientific, and cultural importance. The history of the area is unique and is certain to draw in visitors. The village of Geiranger, situated on the fjord's eastern side, is itself not very steeped in history as it mainly serves as a place for the many tourist cruise ships to dock and deboard. However, the surrounding area is where the intriguing history, science, culture, and landscape all come together to form an interwoven masterpiece of man and nature. The word 'Geiranger' can be roughly translated from Old Norse meaning field of land in a mountainside near a fjord. The village's name comes from the description of the historic farms which are located precariously on the sides of the cliff faces. The few farms that exist on the steep rock walls of the fjord have been long since abandoned due to an aspect of the deadly threat mentioned previously. Mainly goat farms, their existence dates back to the Middle Ages, which reveals something very interesting about the culture of the inhabitants. The rock faces lining the fjord are incredibly steep, so to build and maintain a farm for centuries required an incredible amount of ingenuity and perseverance from those cultivating the land. This speaks to the culture of the area, a culture which values hard work and

intelligent planning in order to thrive in an unforgiving area. This cultural emphasis about forging a path through the challenging environment is not unique to the Geirangerfjord area. A quick glance into the geography of the Nordic countries reveals that they are not filled with easily habitable land with flat nutrient rich plains with a perfect climate.

Quite the opposite is true. This is why the culture of perseverance, a warrior culture perhaps, permeates all the way through history into the descendants of those original Nordic trailblazers. Generation after generation of pushing forward and holding steadfast against the daunting conditions has allowed the culture to become rooted in the philosophy of hard work. One look at the current prosperity of the Nordic countries indicates that this culture still remains entrenched in these ancient but effective values.

The environment is a large part of Geirangerfjord's beauty, so the local authorities have worked to maintain environmental sustainability within the area. This involves electric car rentals as opposed to gasoline powered ones, electric bicycle rentals, and locally sourced food and drink to reduce the amount of transport and therefore fuel burn necessary to sustain the many tourists visiting every day. These measures to reduce carbon emissions may seem redundant, but without them the natural allure of the fjord could be lost due to a changing climate. There are many other activities in the Geirangerfjord area which draw in visitors.

Fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and kayaking are just a few of the activities available in the area, all of which are enhanced by the enchanting cliffs and waterfalls along the fjord. During the wintertime Geirangerfjord becomes a different kind of beautiful, and it is easy to see how the area was an inspiration for the Disney movies 'Frozen' and 'Frozen 2'. The landscapes within the films are very similar to that of Geirangerfjord, which is another reason some tourists might decide to put it on their bucket list. Although there is not the threat of evil princes or ice monsters lurking around the fjord, there is a very real

Within the Nordic countries, choose what a most popular tourist attraction is, and provide your thoughts on its appeal.

danger which lies in the mountain-sides nearby.

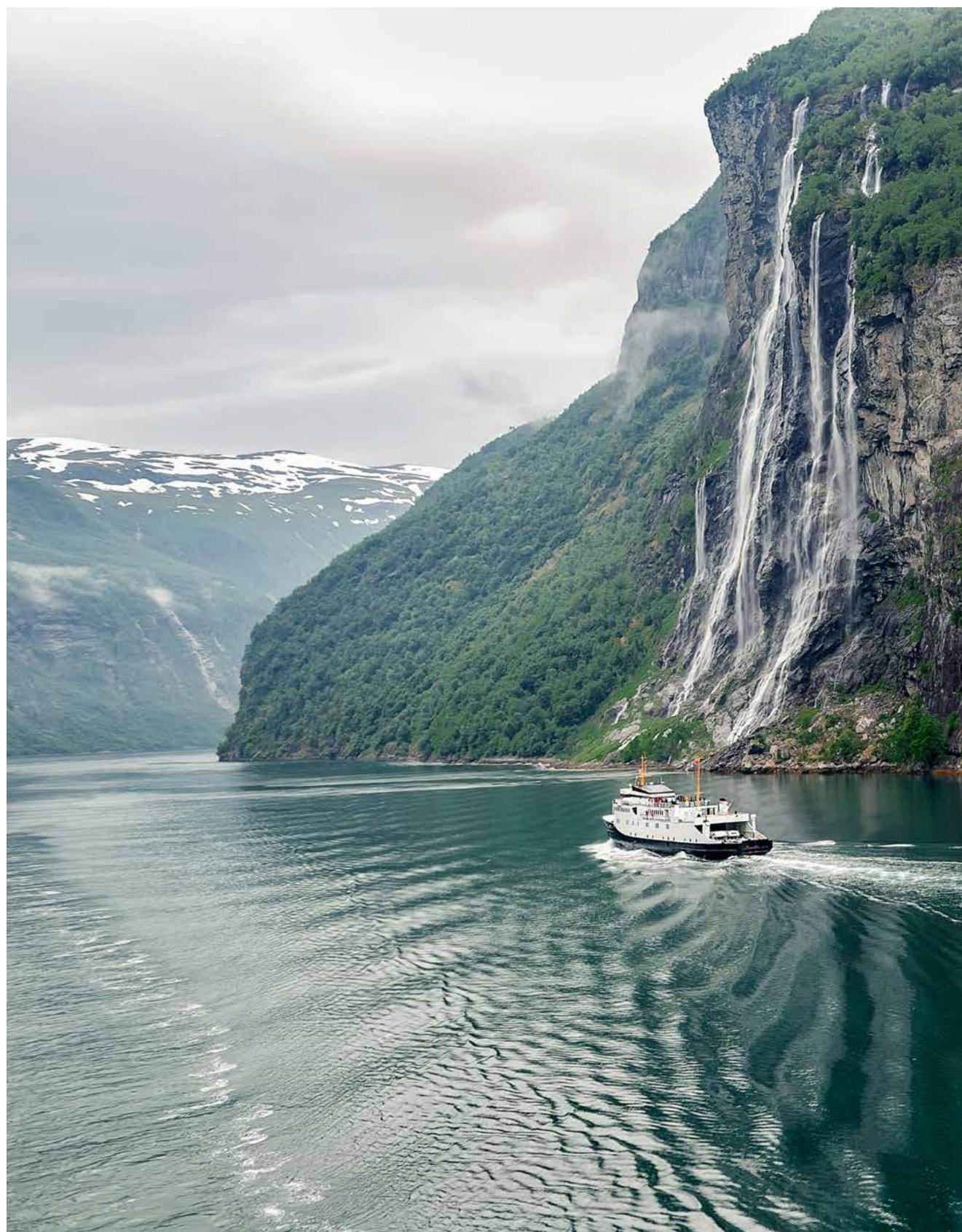
The rock faces surrounding the water were created by glaciers moving through the area, carving through the stone, and creating the fjord. The precariously positioned farms mentioned previously were abandoned in the early twentieth century due to the threat of rockslides which are mainly caused by erosion. Erosion is the silent and slow-moving killer which poses a severe threat to the Geirangerfjord area. In 1934, forty people were killed not by a rockslide, but by a tsunami caused by a mountainside falling into the fjord below. This is the danger which the villages in the Geirangerfjord area face every day. The mountain of Aknesfjallet threatens to spell destruction with a seven-hundred meter long and thirty-meter-wide crack running along it. The crack continues to erode each year, and scientists have determined that the collapse of the one-hundred-fifty-million ton mountainside into the fjord is inevitable and the following tsunami will destroy the villages along the fjord. However, despite the bleak future, residents are not worried for their safety. Aknesfjallet is the most monitored mountain in the world with advanced sensors and cameras monitoring its every move, so that

in the event of an imminent collapse the public can be notified and evacuated safely.

Geirangerfjord is a stunning location sure to appeal to any tourist, and

its protection must be ensured for the years to come. Whether it be from the apparent danger of climate change or the hidden menace of erosion, the fjord's very existence is threatened. Its

precarious nature is part of its beauty however, and Geirangerfjord's rich history illustrates the deep connection between the Nordic people and the natural world.



Matthew Cleveland
Viljan Lodge No. 349
DL Lake Michigan No. 8

Matthew is attending The University of North Dakota where he is majoring in commercial aviation and unmanned aircraft systems. He serves on the University Student Aviation Management association, unmanned aircraft and remote-control club and has earned his private pilot's license. Matthew's family has a long-standing history of involvement with The Vasa Order. He has been attending local lodge meetings since he was a young child and continues to volunteer his time to Lodge Viljan. Matthew's future plans include a degree in commercial aviation and to become a commercial airline pilot.

DISTRICT LODGE NEWS

DL No. 19 Norra Sverige

Time flies, spring is already here, but as Sweden is an elongated country, winter will stay a little longer up north. We are happy to see that all lodges have started up with their meetings. Kurt and I have been visiting some of our lodges and are so happy to meet our friends again. I am also looking forward to seeing many of you in Philadelphia in July at the Grand Lodge meeting. I am happy to be DL 19's delegate. Easter weekend is here as I write this, as you can see in the picture taken on April 14. I wish you all the best and a nice springtime.

SUBMITTED BY MAGGIE AHLIN
THELIN



*Yes, Maggie is ready for take-off to Blåkulla!
(Or ... maybe Philly?)*

DL No. 12 Golden Gate

District 12 has decided to postpone their District Convention until September 30 - October 2, 2022. It will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Sacramento, CA. After researching holding a virtual convention, the District Board determined that an in-person convention was the most appropriate way to continue to honor our Vasa traditions. A big factor was how to educate membership in the complex process of voice and vote. An in-person convention will allow you to meet face to face and renew old friendships from before. Details regarding the convention will be available on the District's website closer to the date.



SUBMITTED BY MARY WAHLBERG

LOCAL LODGE NEWS

Thule No. 127

JAMESTOWN-FALCONER, NY / Thule Lodge of Jamestown/Falconer, began its 115th year in the area with an opening business meeting. Chairman of the lodge, Susan Fredrickson Washington Sipos, welcomed all. Past chairman Tim Miller installed the officers for the year 2022. In addition to chairman Sipos, Stephanie Buccola will serve as vice chairman, John Sipos as the secretary and historian, Loretta Smith as the treasurer, Diane K. Shaw as the lodge chaplain, Bernice Veights as the inner guardsman, Donna Johnson as the Master of Ceremony, Lynne Meyers as the membership chairman, MaryAnn Eva Ingrao as the cultural leader, and trustee/auditors are Karen

Johnson, Wayne Nelson, Julie Pickett, Scott Axelson, and Norman Carlson. Chairman Sipos created a calendar of dates and events for the year for everyone. Thule is having its annual "egg sexa" in April for the Easter season. Treasurer Smith and inner guardsman Veights are on the planning committee. This will be a happy time and meal for all. The annual Scandinavian Folk Festival will be held in Jamestown in the middle of July. All are welcome to attend this fun and musical festival. Thule Lodge wishes all a happy spring season."God dag" to all.

SUBMITTED BY JOHN SIPOS,
LODGE HISTORIAN

Susan Fredrickson Washington Sipos will serve as the Thule Lodge 127 chairman.



Svea No. 296

ERIE, PA / With guidance from long time member Lynnette Gusfafson and daughter Amy Scott, twenty nine people were in attendance at our February 20th meeting, where we eagerly learned some Swedish dances. In addition, we received new member Gary Walston from Fall River, Pa, via Zoom. The Charter was draped in memory of member Sandy Miller.

SUBMITTED BY GARY LARSON

Svea welcomed new member Gary Walston via Zoom

Inset: Svea members eagerly learned some Swedish dances at the February meeting

North Star No. 145

SPOKANE, WA / Installation of officers took place at our February meeting: Bob Lawrence is our chairman, Daga-Karin Lindquist is our Vice Chairman, Steve Matthews remains as Past Chairman, with Shari Campbell taking over as Recording Secretary, Sharon Moses as Financial Secretary and Linda Carter as Chaplain to name a few. Jeri Matthews was honored for her years of service in many areas of the lodge with a Certificate of Merit and a monetary gift. We enjoy the accompaniment from Carla Carnegie both on piano and accordion.

Our March meeting involved the draping the charter for two of our departed members, Mariann Leffler, a member for 69 years and Etta Tederman, a member for 33 years. Mariann and her husband hosted our Midsommar festivities at their home for a number of years. We are excited to begin our potluck meetings in April, celebrating

our 114th anniversary as Vasa North Star Lodge #145.

SUBMITTED BY SHARON MOSES



Jeri Matthews and Daga-Karin Lindquist presentation of Certificate of Merit

Svea No. 348



Zaida Singers conclude a rousing Valborgsmässoafton concert for Svea Lodge #348 - The Zaida singers include Jan Nordin, Zaida Binetti, Kikki Nordin, Ingeborg Andersson, Greta Hutchison, Jenny Lundberg, Anna Michaud, Ingall Skoogh, Kristine Smith and the waving hat of an avid fan.

SAN JOSÉ, CA / Good Friday April 15 on Easter weekend, combined a business meeting with a bonfire celebration of a Valborgsmässoafton welcoming of spring and saying goodbye to winter! (Does global warming have a good side??) Our own "Zaida Singers" gave a rousing group sing-along concert of traditional Swedish folk songs in Swedish, på Svenska, along with some patriotic Swedish and American songs. During the concert they sang both national anthems, "This Land is Your Land" and a host of Swedish folk songs, including "Sov du lilla", "Flickorna i Småland", "I sommarens soliga dagar". Again, we

were graciously hosted at the home of Grand Lodge Treasurer Keith and Emma Hanlon. We feasted on Swedish ärt soppa, yellow pea soup with ham, and drank a little shot of punsch! The homemade limpa was exquisite as was the strawberry shortcake and the pistachio cake! Zaida Binetti led her namesake singing group and Jan Nordin often sounded a start note. This was a rare time to socialize in person as the pandemic wanes—hopefully! Vi sjunga var vi gå! We sing where we go!

SUBMITTED BY JACK KNUTSON

Linné No. 153

SOUTH BEND, IN / After a two-month hiatus, our lodge emerged from hibernation and greeted March with a mighty roar, welcoming three new members and learning of two more on the horizon. Beth Wood, Lodge Chairman, installed Marcus Felde, his wife Christine, and Carol Krizman, and stressed the Vasa precepts of "generosity, truth, and unity." All in attendance welcomed Marcus, Kristine, and Carol with a round of applause and clapped even louder when Beth informed us that another installation ceremony is planned for April. Before a brief meeting to acquaint the new members with the orders of lodge busi-

ness, we held a moment of silence in memory of Beth's husband, Ron, who, in January, lost a battle with COVID and resultant pneumonia. Ron was a loyal member and faithful correspondent to Nordstjernan. A \$200 memorial will be donated to the lodge because, "Ron would have wanted that", Beth said. Our April 3 meeting will feature one of our favorite guests, Matt Baumgartner, the walking-talking encyclopedia, who will continue his fascinating oral history of Sweden.

SUBMITTED BY JOHN D MILLER

Frihet No. 401

SEATTLE, WA / Here we are in the home-stretch with COVID, and life will go on. It was a pleasure to present Julian DelCiello his 40+ year pin. Del and his late wife Doris contributed many years of service to Vasa. Also receiving pins were Janelle MacDicken, secretary-extraordinaire, Julie Hanson, for her exemplary contributions during these trying times. Twenty five year pins were given to Karla Anderson, Lyn & Lynn Frandsen, Larry Sundholm, Sue Jefferson, Derrick Watson, & Kathy Pratt. We are back at our terrific meeting hall once again, with plans being made for our District 13 fall convention.

SUBMITTED BY KAREN RISTON



Julian DelCiello; Del receiving his 40 plus year pin, given by past chairman Karla Anderson who worked with Del for many years.

DONATE to the Education & Scholarship Funds

Send your donations to: Vasa Order of America,
Joan Graham, Grand Secretary
5838 San Jose Ave., Richmond, CA 94804



Back row: Astrid Hanke, Minna Ostlind, Margot Toth, Ulla Hanson, Anna Lundin, Craig Mendenhall, Doug Hanson, Hans Lundin.
Front row: Our centurian Ellen Jacobson, Andy Toth, Elisabeth Mendenhall.

Harmoni No. 472

PORTRLAND, OR / Very special member of Harmoni Lodge celebrated her 100th birthday in February. ELLEN JACOBSON has been an active member of our lodge for many years as well as in other Swedish organizations in our area. She is a great baker and has supplied us with her goodies on many occasions. She also loves a good party and has opened her home for many wonderful get-togethers. She sang with the Scandinavian Choir and shares her Swedish background through all she does. A few of us were lucky to be invited to a small celebration for her 100th birthday. A wonderful afternoon to share memories with this amazing lady. We have so much to thank Ellen for.

SUBMITTED BY ELISABETH MENDENHALL

Skandia No. 549

EDMONTON-ALBERTA, CAN / Sister Verna Larson, a 68-Year Honorary Life Member of Skandia Lodge No. 549, celebrated her 100th Birthday on March 3, 2022. Verna joined Skandia Lodge on April 3, 1954, and was active in Swedish and Scandinavian cultural activities within the Lodge and in the community. She was a member of the Skandia Lodge Ladies' Auxiliary and a member of the Vasa Pioneers. Verna held the office of Assistant Financial Secretary for Skandia and was also Cultural Leader for eight years. She was a member of the Vasa Drill Team and

the Vasa Folkdancers. Verna assisted at Vasa Children's Camp for many years, and helped organize Lucia pageants, a Swedish Christmas show at the Alberta Provincial Museum, and the Anne Charlotte Harvey and Kjell Hanson program at the Museum in 1988. Verna also assisted in bringing the Bear Valley Folk Dancers to Edmonton from Sweden in 1986 and Fredans in 1992. Verna was a most deserving recipient of the Grand Lodge Vasa Order of America Distinguished Service Emblem. Skandia Lodge No. 549 extends a hearty "Thank You" to Sister Verna for her work in our community.

SUBMITTED BY FAE DOTY

Skandia No. 728

PRESCOTT, AZ / Our chairman, Joanne DeMent has led us back into activity after almost two years of forced absence due to the COVID virus. We had an outstanding celebration in December with a traditional Smorgasbord and a beautiful Lucia. It felt wonderful to finally get together for a few hours. Our Lucia was Patti Pantaleo, the granddaughter of members Vito and Louise Pantaleo. Vito served as DM and GLD for AZ District 21, and Louise held lodge and district positions. Patti wore the same crown her grandmother wore as Lucia over 60 years ago. We enjoyed a presentation by Doug Hulmes about Nordic mythology in February. In March we learned all about Finland and the St. Uhro legend as presented by Debbie Wood, Pat Flippen and Doug Hulmes. We had homemade Sima (a fermented lemonade) and Finnish tarts, cardamom bread and Swedish cinnamon rolls. In April we will have a program on personal stories of our immigrant family heritage. A favorite treat, Semla, will be served. The lodge will celebrate its 42nd Anniversary at a luncheon in May, and a fun outing in the pines for a Midsummer picnic in June. Scandia is trying hard to get back to normal despite unusual circumstances.

SUBMITTED BY PAT FLIPPEN



Verna Larson's 100th & Fabulous Birthday Celebration.

Nordic No. 611

WORCHESTER, MA / The new year brought a new meeting hall and a new slate of officers for 2022. Installation of officers took place and the new meeting place was christened. February's meeting involved a presentation by Nancy Schultzberg about Anna Joneses Ersdotter followed by a Valentine's day auction. Chairman Merryl Havens presented Sue Johnson a dala swedish sweater for her over 40 years as the lodge secretary. The March meeting had a cultural presentation about how Swedes love bananas. Bob Beldon was presented with an empty coffee can award for being in charge of the coffee for the last 35 years. Thanks so much Bob for all your hard work for the lodge. Merryl Haven entertained us with her

*Chairman Merryl Havens center,
Master of Ceremonies Karen Ranauro
and Carol Carter Treasurer*

wonderful voice by singing beautiful Irish songs, which turned into a sing along. Thank you Merryl. April's meeting will be bingo.

SUBMITTED BY ÅKE JANSSON



*Bob Belden
in the center
- our coffee
king!*

Årets Svensk-Amerikan

NASA-astronaut Jessica Meir valdes 2020 till Årets Svensk-Amerikan. På grund av rådande pandemi och NASA-policy kunde inte Jessica Meir besöka Sverige sommaren 2020 för att mottaga sin utmärkelse. Det skulle dröja tills november 2021 innan Jessica Meir fick sin utmärkelse.

Lösningen blev ett samarbetsprojekt mellan Kommitén för Årets Svensk-Amerikan och Luleå Tekniska Universitet. Jessica Meir hade utnämnts till Hedersdoktor vid universitetet 2020, men inte heller den utmärkelsen hade kunnat överlämnas till Jessica Meir det året. Med klartecken från NASA kom hon till Sverige och Luleå för att hyllas både som Hedersdoktor och Årets Svensk-Amerikan.

Vid en strålande bankett anslutning till hedersdoktoratet överlämnade representanterna för Vasa Orden av Amerika, Catherine Bringselius Nilsson och Göran Nilsson, utmärkelsens insignier inför en publik på drygt trehundra personer. Ordförande Catherine Bringselius Nilsson berättade om vår Orden och utmärkelsen. Göran Nilsson läste upp telegram från Kungen och vår ambassadör i USA. Publiken jublade och stämde in i hyllanden av Jessica Meir. Efteråt fick vi besvara många frågor om Vasa Orden av Amerika och projektet Årets Svensk-Amerikan.

Traditionenligt har utmärkelsen Årets Svensk-Amerikan delats ut växelvis i Karlstad och Växjö. Växjö skulle ha hållit i huvudarrangemanget 2020. Så blev det nu inte, men det känns mycket bra, att Jessica Meir tacksmärt motagit sin fina utmärkelse från Vasa Orden av Amerika i Sverige.

De båda distriktslogerna i Sverige har tyvärr fattat beslut om nedläggning av projektet.

CATHERINE BRINGSIELIUS NILSSON

In connection with the presentation of the honorary doctorate at Luleå University of Technology, the Vasa Order of America representatives Catherine Bringselius Nilsson and Göran Nilsson presented the insignia of the SAY award to an audience of just over three hundred people. Right: Jessica Meir with Catherine Bringselius Nilsson.



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SWEDISH NEWS

Skåne No. 570

MALMÖ, SWEDEN / Vårt sista Vasa-möte för våren inträffar 22 april. Två år har vi genomlidit mer eller mindre inom hemmets fyra väggar. Vi ser nu fram emot semestrar och sommarsol. Passtiderna hos Polisen har tagit slut, så många får bereda sig på ytterligare en semester inom landet. Vad gör väldet, när vi bor i ett land med både fred och frihet och med många enastående

sevärdheter. Passa på och upplev vårt Sverige uppmanar guiden tillika kulturledare i LL570, som själv beger sig till solens och vindarnas ö, Öland. På grund av nya Corona-restriktioner blev januarimötet inställt, men det högtidliga installationsmötet i februari kunde genomföras med berömligt bistånd från LL631 Tomelilla. Stämningen förhöjdes av glitrande långklännigar och fladdrande frackskört med ceremonier av sällan skådat slag. På

marsmötet höll kulturledaren föredrag med bilder om Vasaarkivet i Bishop Hill och dess svenska historia. Kulturledaren erinrade också i sin rapport om Vårdagjämningen den 20 mars, som är en av årstidernas hörnstenar. Sommartiden har börjat, så nu är det bara aprilväderet som står i vägen för att fyrverkeriet av blommade buskar och träd ska explodera. På aprilmötet är hörseln i blickpunkten. Kulturledaren har lovat lära ut sitt ordförråd i teck-

enspråk, som består av två ord. De Dövas Riksförbund firar nämligen 100 år i år. Vi hoppas på vackert väder i sommar på vår grillfest den 19 juni i någon av Malmös vackra parker. Då välkomnar vi likasinnade kända och okända att delta i vår gemenskap för att få intresse för Vasa Orden av Amerika över en varm korv med senap & ketchup..

SUBMITTED BY MARIANNE ANDERSSON

Höganäs No.634

HÖGANÄS, SWEDEN / Det kom ett brev till Logen Höganäs från en 13-årig flicka, Saga, som ska åka på en Summer Camp utanför Seattle, Four Winds Westward HO. Hon undrade om Logen kunde hjälpa henne med ett bidrag till resan. Normalt har vi ingen verksamhet för sponsring, men efter diskussioner i styrelsen och Logen, erbjöd sig flera medlemmar att skänka ett bidrag. När insamlingen avslutats hade vi kommit upp i en summa av 10.400:- vilket överlämnades till en lycklig Saga. Som tack för bidraget har Saga lovat komma till vårt logemöte i september för att berätta om sitt äventyr i USA. I mars kunde vi äntligen träffas igen efter den långa

pandemin, och 50 förväntansfulla Vasasysskon samlades till Systrarnas afton. KL Sy Agneta framförde hälsningar från våra vänloger i USA och berättade om den fruktade gangstern Al Capone. LH Br Hans hade hittat en artikel om isvintrarna på 40-talet när man kunde gå över till Danmark på den tjocka isen. Vi bjöds på en supergod fiskgratäng med räkor och sparris, kaffe och kaka. Kvällens tema "Svensktoppen 60 år" blev en musikalisk kavalkad, blandat med frågor på alla välkända låtar från förr. Nästa Logemöter den 23 april har temat "Från Biskopskulla till Bishop Hill" en berättelse i ord och bild om vårt Vasa Arkiv.

SUBMITTED BY BERIT & HANS BOGREN



Gästande Ordenssysskon från Logerna Kärnan nr 608 och Nybyggarna nr 698.

STORMÄSTARENS MEDDELANDE

KÄRA VASASYSKON,
Det här blir mitt sista Storlogemeddelande i Vasastjärnan. De senaste fyra åren har varit händelserika och annorlunda för oss alla. Nu har några av logerna öppnat upp igen för möten på plats, andra har fortsatt med zoom-möten.



Jag har länge tänkt på hur genomtänkta våra kulturprogram och aktiviteter är och om Sveriges representanter känner till oss? För att få svar på frågan tog vi hjälp av Arne Dunhem för att sätta upp ett möte med Sveriges ambassadör i USA, Karin Olofsdotter. Nancy och jag tog ett tåg som fick stopp på vägen och vi anlände därför en timme sent till Washington. Vi hade ett trevligt möte med ambassadören och jag fick mina frågor

besvarade. Karin Olofsdotter bekräftade att man i Sverige uppfattar oss som en stor tillgång för att sprida svensk kultur i landet och hålla den levande. Hon kommer att sända över ett brev som bekräftar detta. Det här är någonting jag funderat mycket på. Ambassadören har nu blivit inbjuden till årets Storlogemöte och hon eller hennes representant kommer försöka närvara för att hålla tal. Mötet kändes väldigt uppmuntrande för Orden. Vänta inte med att boka hotell under Storlogemötet. Vi har reserverat ett antal rum till ett starkt rabatterat pris. Ring Marriott och ge koden VASA GRAND LODGE CONVENTION för att få rabatten. Ring 1.888.236.2427 från USA och Kanada, och 020-795122 från Sverige. Mötets webbsida nås antingen via vasaorder.com eller på vasagrand-lodge2022.com

Alla som vill medverka under mötet måste registrera sig med formuläret och betala en avgift på \$30 även om man enbart avser att besöka aktiviteter som inte kostar något extra.

Det har arrangerats en bussresa till New Jersey Vasa Park - vår ordens största park. De som kommer med på utflykten får fika vid ankomsten och senare på dagen lunch som arrangeras av Vasa Park Ladies Auxiliary. Njut av en simtur i vår extra stora pool och glöm då inte ta med badkläder. Alla får en handduk att ta med sig hem som ett minne av dagen och besöket. Eller ta en lugn promenad runt parken med något kallt att dricka i handen.

Jag har just kommit tillbaks från årsmöte i New Jersey Distrikts 6, det första på tre år. Det var ett välbesökt möte och den nye Distriktsmästaren är den yngsta

vi någonsin haft. Ännu en nyhet för distriktet är att samtliga tre medlemmar i den exekutiva styrelsen plus vice distriktsmästaren alla är damer. Det samma gäller skattmästare och sekreterare ... WOW!

Kom ihåg att vår orden behöver LEVANDE ENTUSIASISTISKA MEDLEMMAR - SPRID VÅRT NAMN! TV TV TV (Tala Vasa) med ENTUSIASM! En person som saknar entusiasm kan aldrig utveckla det i någon annan. Men en entusiastisk person får snart entusiastiska anhängare. Vi måste tänka på det!

Jag ser fram emot att träffa er alla i Philadelphia.

I SANNING OCH ENIGHET,
ART BJORKNER, STORMÄSTARE