



VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization

LOCAL LODGE SVEA NO. 296

Instituted May 20, 1914

Erie, Pennsylvania

January 2024 News and Notes

Hälsningar!

2024 - WELCOME! This promises to be a terrific year - we have new members coming in, continued support from the District through our website and shared programming, approved By-Laws after years of working on them, and an excellent program of events for Svea! You don't want to miss out on the excitement!

REMINDERS:

Be thinking about who in your family might benefit from the scholarship programs - adult or youth. 2024 Applications and information are now available on the website or see one of the officers at our meetings. The scholarship program is sponsored by PA District #9 and is a phenomenal way to promote our organization and Scandinavian heritage.

MEMBERSHIP - It's that time of year when we ask that you send in your annual Svea dues. Dues remain \$35 per year. What does \$35 get you?

- Vasa Archives – preserves the history of our lodges and our members. It serves as a resource to members for genealogical and immigrant research of Scandinavian ancestors.
- Nordstjernen – The Vasa Star – is the official publication of the Order, published 4 times per year, and mailed to every family in the Order. It carries information from the Grand Lodge, articles about our Swedish heritage, language lessons, and Lodge activities from around the US, Canada, and Sweden.
- Old Age and Benefit Fund – financial assistance to members in need, based on age and years in the Order. Check out the website for the eligibility matrix and application - or see an officer.
- PA District #9 Education Fund – provides scholarships for the annual youth Swedish language camp, *Sjölunden*, and biennial grants for Elderhostel studies. The Grand Lodge provides scholarships for students in higher education.
- Facebook – Svea Lodge 296 – introduces you to other Scandinavian cultural opportunities in addition to our local activities.
- We are a Benevolent Society, making monetary contributions to valuable organizations, as well as, collecting tangible donations for local social service agencies.
- Networking opportunities.
- Voting power at the General Meetings.

SOV I RO

We express our sincere condolences to our Sister Lodge, Lodge Goteborg #452, in Gothenburg, Sweden on the death of their Chairman, Torsten Olsson in December. We hope their Lodge will continue the relationship that has just begun between us. Goteborg will be celebrating their 100 year anniversary in 2024.

In addition, sympathy is extended to our member, Ellie Supinski, on the death of her mother, Virginia Erickson who passed away on December 30th.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge Angelic Nordin who died on December 23rd. Angelic is the sister of our newest Svea friend, Dennis Carlson.

Traditional Viking Prayer ~

Lo, there do I see my father,
Lo, there do I see my mother, my sisters and my brothers.
Lo, there do I see the line of my people, back to the beginning.
Lo, my brethren call to me.
They bid me take my place among them, in the halls of Valhalla,
Where the brave may live forever.

WHAT'S IN THIS MONTHS NEWSLETTER?

- Mark Your Calendar
 - Things to do in NWPA - Scandinavian and otherwise
 - Bokklubb - Astrid & Veronica, January 31st at 3PM at Karen's
 - News from our Sister Lodges and PA District Lodge #9
 - Benevolence - be thinking of an organization to support
 - A busy December
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Upcoming events:

No VASA Lunch (formerly known as VASA Breakfast) in January. The past few lunches have been sparsely in attended. Whether that's because of the weather, the location, the time, we will be discussing if we want to take a break from lunch meetings or go back to breakfast.

January 21, 2024 - Svea General meeting at Luther Memorial 1:00PM. We will be installing our officers at this time!

January 31, 2024 - Bokklubb - Astrid & Veronica

Other Things to do in NWPA with your Svea friends:

Scandinavian Heritage Days - the first Saturday of each month through May 2024 at Jamestown Community College, Jamestown, NY

Check out the Erie Otters Schedule!

February 17th is the District #9 group activity - Lucky Strike. Join us on Zoom for this very interesting program on the unusual collaboration between the US military and Swedish 'internment camps'. Reserving a spot on the Zoom platform is necessary so that the link can be sent to you. Please let Pat know or better yet, register through the website.

Our Annual Lucia Festival of Light was held on December 10th, 2023! It was a spectacular event. We had a great number of youth participants this year, more than 30, that made the program extra special. The tomtar are always a highlight, skipping down the aisle, singing 'Tipp Tapp' and they did not disappoint! Several of the youth had narration parts that explained the meaning behind our Festival of Light and all did a wonderful job speaking.



Book Club - Bokklubb -

Our next book, [Astrid & Veronica](#), by Linda Olsson, will be discussed January 31st at 3PM at Karen's. Presently, those who have been participating in Bokklubb have opted to meet in the afternoons. However, we are open to changing the time frame or adding another group for those folks who work and would prefer an evening or weekend time.

News from our Sister Lodges and PA District Lodge #9

Drott Lodge: Members of Drott joined with other Scandinavian groups in the DC/Virginia areas to participate in their Lucia Fests.

Nobel Monitor: Had their Lucia Fest on December 10th as well.

PA DL #9: The ReEnergize and ReBuild committee is putting together ideas that the 3 lodges can do together. There will be a Zoom program on Lucky Strike, February 17th 3:PM; Lucky Strike is about the WWII initiative that put American soldiers in Swedish war camps. It's not what you might think! If you are a history buff, this program is for you!

The R & R Committee is also working on a survey for each of the 3 Lodges. Our Lodges, in Erie, Cleveland, and the DC area have very different needs and interests so we are trying to come up with ideas that are specific to the Lodges as well as being cohesive to the group.

It won't be too early to start thinking about the District Convention that will be September 27-29, 2024. The District Board is working on a contract with Geneva Conference Center in Geneva, Ohio. It is a lovely setting. The committee is negotiating a reasonably priced weekend. So be thinking about being a delegate for Svea. Based on our membership numbers, we are entitled to 4 delegates. Even if you aren't a delegate, you are welcome to attend the convention.

Svea's By-Laws have been presented to the District Board. Rolf Bergman and Bruce Elfvin reviewed them to make sure that we have followed Grand Lodge guidelines. There are a few tweaks that need to be made but we're getting closer to having them adopted.

Next District Zoom is 1-8-24 at 6:30.

Our Benevolence:

Karen Lundwall has taken bags and bags of hygiene items to Holy Trinity for their shower and laundry program. Ron King from Holy Trinity is so very grateful to Svea for their generous donations of shampoo and body wash. Being able to shower and put on clean clothes does wonders for a person's dignity. Thank you to all who contributed.

Looking back on 2023, I am so proud of all that Svea has done for our community. There is always a great need but we are taking meaningful strides to help others. We may be a small group but we are mighty in spirit!

We strive to honor our aged members with cards and phone calls to let them know we value them. Let Cheryl know if anyone needs a card or call.

Lisa Davis supplied Swedish birthday cards. Members have volunteered to send the cards during the month to those celebrating another year around the sun!

Thank you for your generosity toward Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's new outreach ministry of providing laundry and shower facilities for those in need of clean clothes and bodies! You donated 34 small and 2 large bottles of shampoo, 27 small and 7 large bottles of body wash, 16 small empty refillable bottles and several extras of toothpaste and toothbrushes, hand lotion and baby powder. Thrivent Financial gave us a grant with which we were able to purchase 8 bath and 8 hand towels, 12 wash cloths, 6 laundry baskets, 4 laundry bags, 112 laundry detergent pods, 210 dryer sheets, and 200 small empty refillable bottles.



It's been a busy December for members of Svea #296!

At our November meeting, Lorraine shared some information about Viking Runes and their meanings. We then proceeded to make Rune ornaments that will be used on the Viking Christmas tree for the Waterford Heritage Society's event December 1-3, 2023. Thanks to Craig for cutting the wooden discs and Lorraine for helping us make them.

Once again the ladies, Martha, Lorraine, and Pat did a beautiful job decorating the Waterford tree and representing Svea Lodge #296.

Several of Svea's members - Gary and Sarah Larson, Cheryl Brown, Linda Graffius, and Pat Bellingham did some traveling PR work in the Erie Community. On December 6th we went to a meeting of the Torch Club at the Kahkwa Club. Gary did a presentation of Swedish Christmas traditions to the group. What better to showcase Swedish traditions than pickled herring and glogg! Dressed in Swedish attire, the ladies passed out samples of each to the meeting goers. We were such a hit that we were invited to the Springhill Retirement Center and again shared those traditions with residents!



Springhill 2024

Cheryl sharing glogg and pickled herring!

Ädelmod, Sanning och Enighet
Generosity, Truth and Unity