



VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization

LOCAL LODGE SVEA NO. 296

Instituted May 20, 1914

Erie, Pennsylvania

February 2024 News and Notes

Alla hjärtans dag! All Hearts Day!

The maintenance man from one of the schools I taught at said:

Life is like a roll of toilet paper,

the closer you get to the end the faster it goes!

It seems like we just got through Lucia and it's February already!

A few weeks ago, a survey was sent to our membership, looking for some background on who Svea is, where family came from, what activities people are interested in. The basic results from the 9 respondents:

- Being a member of Svea Lodge provides a sense of belonging and connection to Scandinavia
- Everyone has used the website and reads the newsletter - especially important so we can show the District that the website is worth the \$\$! Svea is in the process of getting on line payment capabilities. I'm just waiting for the financial approval from Wild Apricot.
- The majority of our respondents are Baby Boomers, ages 59-77.
- 4 people have grandparents that were Scandinavian immigrants, 2 have parents, 2 did DNA testing, and one person just likes Scandinavians (but who doesn't!).
- Midsommar, Kraftskiva, and Lucia were the top enjoyable cultural events and attending Jamestown Cultural activities was a contender.
- Each of the 5 Nordic countries has been visited by members.

So what does that tell us? Because our membership is 2nd and 3rd generation Scandinavian, it is that much more important to learn about the culture and maintain our traditions; Midsommar, Lucia, Kraftskiva. 5 out of 9 people have

visited Sweden - I see another excursion of Svea members and friends going to Sweden in the next year or two.

There have been some questions about member dates. When we first began our website endeavor, members were given a start date of 2022. That is NOT the number of years in Svea, your initiation date, only the number of years of membership on the website.

As the District Secretary, I have responsibility for keeping member records of the 3 Lodges in our District; Svea, Nobel-Monitor, and Drott. Our own Cheryl Brown from Svea is the last member whose membership card is written in Swedish!

One of the benefits of membership in the Vasa Order is a subscription to Nordstjernen - The North Star. Please let me know if you are not receiving your publication 4 times per year. Some members opt to get a personal subscription for 12 issues per year. Information can be found in the Nordstjernen if you wish to do that.

Sköt om dig!

Pat

WHAT'S IN THIS MONTHS NEWSLETTER?

- Mark Your Calendar
- January 21 meeting in a nutshell
- Things to do in NWPA - Scandinavian and otherwise
- Bokklubb - Astrid & Veronica TBD
- News from our Sister Lodges and PA District Lodge #9
- Benevolence

Upcoming events:

February 5, 2024 - Vasa Lunch - Butch's Restaurant, 11:30AM

February 17, 2024 - Lucky Strike - 3:PM Zoom.

February 18, 2024 - Svea General meeting at Luther Memorial 1:00PM. We will be installing the remaining officers at this time AND initiating 3 new members - Kirk J, Dennis C, and Cyndi T.

Meeting Notes from 1/21/24

Despite the weather forecast for our January 2024 meeting, we had a great attendance! There were a few officers missing that weren't able to get installed but we will get that taken care of in February. At the meeting we also approved the 2024 Budget. Svea had 3 new applications for Lodge membership that were all approved:

Kirk J, comes from the Edinboro area and has alot to offer our group. He is an avid outdoorsman, enjoys hunting, fishing, and is a blacksmith. Kirk also will share his love of bees with us for one of our cultural programs. Any creature that loves to dance has to be right up our cultural alley!

Dennis C has an interesting past with Svea. He was originally a member from 1960-1966. He moved away and had joined Nordic Lodge #706 in Atlanta for several years. Dennis has returned to Erie and his roots in Svea Lodge #296! Welcome home, Dennis!

Cyndi T was also a previous member of Svea who has decided to resume her membership. Cyndi is an entrepreneur in the event planning business and has also expressed a strong interest in using those skills for Lucia.

To wrap up our first meeting of the year Fika wasn't just coffee but included cups of warm glogg, pickled herring, and some cheese, meats, and crackers. The glogg recipe came from Nancy, Martha, and Pat's family - handed down several generations from Axel and Jenny Lundstrom. The herring, of course, was from Chery!

We discussed celebrating Walpurgis Day - April 30th - the day when Scandinavians say WELCOME SPRING - GOODBYE WINTER! Traditionally, Walpurgis is celebrated with a big bonfire, singing, dancing, and general merriment. Pat and Gary have spoken with a representative of the Sommerlyst Club, a Danish organization, about holding our bonfire at their campgrounds on upper Cherry Street Ext. Collaborating with this group could be very interesting and lots of fun. We'll keep you posted but in the meantime, I'm investigating some snaps songs - snapsvisa. We're getting pretty good at Helan Går so I have high hopes for Du Ska Få Mitt Gamla Snapsglas - You'll Inherit My Snapsglass When I Die!

Other Things to do in NWSA 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!

Book Club - Bokklubb

Unfortunately, our book discussion of Astrid & Veronica, by Linda Olsson, was postponed. Our hostess, Karen, was under the weather and graciously didn't want to pass any germs on to the readers!

Presently, those who have been participating in Bokklubb have opted to meet in the afternoons. However, we are open to changing the time frame for those folks who work and would prefer an evening or weekend time.

Sarah shared a possible book for the next time - Sour Milk in Sheep's Wool by Helen Lundstrom Erwin. The tale of a milkmaid and a suffragette changing the world.

News from our Sister Lodges and PA District Lodge #9

Drott Lodge: Their officers were elected last week. Arne is now chair for a year. Lucia was presented with ASA in December. The Holiday Bazaar was hosted with House of Sweden. Drott is now using QR codes so people can get the newsletter.

Nobel Monitor: Participated in Lucia with Vasa Voices and Swedish Cultural Society. Karen's granddaughter was Lucia. 1/14 installation of officers, Cheryl and Pat were to travel to Cleveland for the installation ceremony, however, the weather got the best of everyone and the ladies did not go. February 11th will be their platter and pea soup. 2 new members will be initiated at the next meeting.

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!

Each Lodge is putting together a questionnaire for their members so that we might better address the needs of the membership.

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, they will be decided at the April meeting. Based on Svea 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 3-11-24 at 6:30.

Our Benevolence:

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.

Once again, thank you to the members who contributed to the dinner bags for the Overflow Shelter at St. Johns Lutheran; Cheryl, Karen, Martha, Sarah, Gary, and Pat. Pam, from Luther Memorial, and Sarah are busy assembling the ham and cheese sandwiches, along with the bananas, cookies, crackers, and drink boxes. A total of 45 bags were made and delivered to the church on 1-31-24.



Ädelmod, Sanning och Enighet
Generosity, Truth and Unity