

# DISTRIKT TIDNINGEN

"The District Paper" \* Newsletter of Pennsylvania District No. 9, Vasa Order of America

Spring 1992

## See You In September

Having grown up in the 1960s, your Newsletter Editor recalls a forgettable rock song of the day that included the repeated line, "See you in September..." The basic theme of the song, namely teenage romance, is not otherwise useful for this newsletter, but the lyric reminds us of the major Vasa event for members of Pennsylvania District No. 9, the 45th biennial convention, on September 25-27, in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, just east of Pittsburgh. Information on the



convention is scattered through this newsletter, and your local lodge Chairman or Secretary should have complete details. So, see you in September...

## Redligheten Lodge No. 493

Redligheten Lodge No. 493, of Swissvale, Pennsylvania, while not one of the earliest Vasa lodges, may be one of the oldest lodges in terms of its continuous existence as an organization. Redligheten Lodge, you see, was actually organized on February 9, 1889, more than seven years before the Vasa Order was founded. Redligheten (the name translates as "integrity" or "honesty") was organized as an independent social and beneficial aid organization for Swedish immigrants, with 25 founding members. For more than 38 years Redligheten Lodge remained independent, until it joined the Vasa Order on July 2, 1927; a few of its founding members from 1889 were still around to sign its Vasa charter in 1927.

In its early years, many of Redligheten Lodge's members were also members of the Bethel Swedish

Lutheran Church, and the church and lodge maintained a close association through the years. For some years Redligheten met at Bethel Church. Today the lodge meets on the second Saturday of the month at the Second Presbyterian Church of Swissvale.

In 1964, during a time when many Vasa lodges experienced membership losses, Jupiter Lodge No. 450 of East Liberty, Pennsylvania, merged with Redligheten Lodge. In the 1970s Redligheten Lodge had its own difficult days but vowed to keep itself alive. With 67 members as of the end of 1991, and having taken on the daunting task of hosting the 1992 convention of the Pennsylvania District, Redligheten Lodge is very much alive. More than 103 years after first being founded, Redligheten Lodge can proudly claim to continue to uphold the principles of honesty and integrity.



# District Master's Column



I'm glad to be able to greet you with our second Pennsylvania District No. 9 newsletter. I hope you had a chance to read the first one issued last December. I wish to thank Ron Carlson, District Cultural Leader and District newsletter editor, and his wife, Vicki, for the excellent quality of our first publication. Our District membership should receive this during the month of June, hopefully before the midsummer celebrations so important to Swedes.

As you probably know, the mid-summer celebration, held on a day near the summer solstice, is a unique festive occasion for Scandinavians. A may pole (maj stång) is decorated with green branches and flowers, then raised so that children and adults can dance ring dances and sing favorite songs. If you have wanted to participate in a midsummer party where a may pole is decorated and raised but have never had the opportunity, take the lead in seeing if your lodge could get together and do so. I always find it an exciting event.

In early May the District Executive Board met at the Radisson Hotel in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. A good portion of the meeting was devoted to planning for our next Pennsylvania District No. 9 convention, to be held September 25-27, 1992, at the same hotel. Redlighteten Lodge No. 493, our convention host lodge, is busy planning the various events connected with the convention, with Balder Lodge No. 308 planning the Memorial Service for Sunday morning. Your lodge should have already received raffle tickets, the purchase of which helps defray the convention costs for Redlighteten Lodge; I hear the prizes are great. Delegates from the various lodges in

the District will soon be (or already have been) chosen. But be assured that any non-delegate Vasa members who are interested in seeing how the District operates are welcome to come and see.

Since Redlighteten Lodge is hosting the convention, we thought it appropriate to highlight their lodge history in this newsletter. My wife Marty and I took the convenient opportunity to visit Redlighteten Lodge on May 2 since we were already in the Pittsburgh area for the Executive Board Meeting. We really enjoyed the warmth of the people and the pot-luck supper was delicious. Earlier, on March 14, 1992, we had occasion to attend a delightful 67th Anniversary Dinner at Harmony Lodge No. 465 in Youngstown, Ohio.

I will share one bit of coincidence that was personally gratifying. I spent my school years in Two Harbors, Minnesota, a town about 30 miles northeast of Duluth, on the shores of Lake Superior, where my folks continue to live. As it happened, Minnesota District No. 7 was holding its annual convention in Two Harbors on April 26. When their District Master found out I was from Two Harbors, she sent me an invitation to come (home) and visit them. I did so and met another group of great Vasa people. Not only did I get a chance to go to another District's convention to learn how they operate, I also got a chance to visit with my folks and celebrate my mom's birthday.

I'll look for you at the convention!

In Truth and Unity,

Rolf Bergman, District Master

# News From The Lodges

Svea Lodge No. 296, in Erie, Pennsylvania, holds a Midsommar Fest on June 20, 1992, at Grotto Park, beginning at 12 noon. Come and join in decorating and raising the maypole, singing, dancing and eating. (Contact Ellen Carlson, Secretary, 2913 Holland St., Erie, PA 16503, phone 814-456-3823.) Svea Lodge marked its 78th anniversary on May 9.

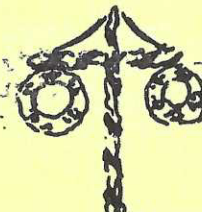
At Trillinggren Lodge No. 332, Baltimore, Maryland, plans are underway for our joint picnic with Drott Lodge, to be held on Sunday, July 19, 1992, in the Teahouse Pavilion at Gambrill State Park near Frederick, Maryland. This annual affair has been a tradition shared by our two lodges for many years, and is another opportunity for our members to have a day of fun, good food, and great fellowship. (Contact Ruth McIntee, Secretary, 903 Sibley Rd., Towson, MD 21204, phone 410-296-3761.) Also, Trillinggren plans to conduct Swedish language classes after our regular monthly lodge meetings. Brother George Edlund will be the instructor.



Drott Lodge No. 168, of Washington, DC, held a very successful dinner of yellow pea soup and plätter (small Swedish pancakes, but you knew that) on April 10 with 95 members, guests and friends in attendance. We

heartily recommend this as a great way to encourage attendance and attract new members. Drott's 12th annual Swedish Bazaar will be held Saturday, October 24, at the Church of the Little Flower, Bethesda, MD, from 11 AM to 3 PM, with gifts, crafts and great food. Y'all come! (Contact Ron Carlson, Secretary, 616 Putnam Place, Alexandria, VA, phone 703-549-5908.)

Oscarsborg Lodge No. 172 sends greetings from Philadelphia. The lodge celebrated its 82nd anniversary on May 16 with lunch and a matinee show, "Sweethearts on Parade." On May 24, Oscarsborg enjoyed its annual Maypole along



with crowning the 1992 May Queen and King. Lunch concluded with anniversary cake and folk dancing. The lodge will join the midsummer festivities at the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia on June 7. On June 28th, the regular lodge meeting will feature Swedish Fläg Day and Name Days - and lots of blue and yellow. Special birthday greetings go out to Margareta Pihl, who will be 100 on July 24, and Anna Olofson, who turns 105 on Sept. 7. (Contact Linda Smith, Secretary, 3125 Mill Rd., Doylestown, PA 18901, phone 215-794-5950.)



## Cultural Library



District Cultural Leader Ron Carlson has in his care a small treasurer trove of materials on Swedish culture, traditions and history that local lodges are encouraged to borrow. Included are the Cultural Leader's Resource Book; Youth Club Manual and Dance Instruction Handbook; records and tapes of Swedish songs (in Swedish); Folk Costumes of Sweden (in English);

Aret Runt med Kungafamiljen (Year Around with the Royal Family), Svensk Jul (Swedish Christmas), I Tomtarnas Värld (In the Tomtar's World), Dansa I En Ring (dance instruction book), all in Swedish. You may find some of this material useful for program ideas. Contact Ron Carlson, District Cultural Leader, 616 Putnam Pl., Alexandria, VA 22302, phone 703-549-5908.

# Old Age And Benefit Fund

Many Vasa members may be unaware of one of the potential benefits of membership in the Order, namely access to what is known as the "Old Age and Benefit Fund." Somewhat mis-named, the Old Age and Benefit Fund exists to provide financial assistance to members of the Vasa Order for almost any reason. A portion of each member's annual dues goes toward this fund, which is administered by the Grand Lodge; each District is allocated a share of the fund based on the Vasa membership within the District. In the case of Pennsylvania District No. 9, the fund level available to our members is quite substantial, but applications from individual members to obtain assistance has

been limited over the years, perhaps in large part out of ignorance. The Grand Lodge and District Lodge do place certain stipulations on the amount of funds that a member can obtain (currently no more than \$200 per year, with a \$1,000 lifetime maximum), but in a pinch even those modest amounts can be of help. The only other requirement for most of us is that one must be a member of the Vasa Order for at least five years before withdrawing monies from this fund. (Benefit members, of which there are very few, can obtain funds without meeting the five-year membership requirement.) Contact your local lodge Recording Secretary or the District Secretary for further information.



Pennsylvania District No. 9  
Newsletter Editor  
616 Putnam Place  
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

