



VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization

LOCAL LODGE SVEA NO. 296

Instituted May 20, 1914

Erie, Pennsylvania

March 2024 News & Notes

Happy Easter! Glad Påsk!

What a wonderful group of members we have! The support for our organization has been awesome. We will be initiating a few more members in the next few months. I'm thinking some will have to be via Zoom as they are a bit of a distance from Erie. No matter where you're from - We welcome each of you to our Svea Family.

If you have birch trees or pussy willow bushes close to you, nip off a few branches to bring to our March meeting. We are once again making Swedish Easter trees to welcome in Spring. If you are lucky enough to have your branches bloom, they are beautiful when mixed with the brightly colored feathers and eggs.

One of our newer members, Tom H. is going to be traveling to Sweden soon. He was wondering if anyone had any suggestions for what he should put on his itinerary. I'm sure quite a few have ideas of what you would like to visit again should the opportunity arise. One of my favorites was the stave churches in Norway. I wish we had been able to have a longer time investigating them, but it will have to be another time! Then there was the tattoo adventure in Stockholm. It's time to get out my phone and reminisce with the photos I took.

If you are in the Erie area on April 8th, be sure to have your ISO approved glasses and are able to find a not too congested place to observe the eclipse.

Sköt om dig!

Pat

WHAT'S IN THIS MONTHS NEWSLETTER?

- Mark Your Calendar
- February 18th meeting in a nutshell
- Things to do in NWPA - Scandinavian and otherwise
- Bokklubb - Astrid & Veronica
- News from our Sister Lodges and PA District Lodge #9
- Benevolence

Upcoming events:

March 4, 2024 - Vasa Lunch - Butch's Restaurant, 11:30AM

March 17, 2024 - General Meeting. We will be making traditional Easter Trees. Bring birch or pussy willow branches, feathers, and florist wire if you have them.

March 31, 2024 - Glad Pask! Happy Easter!

April 8, 2024 - Solar Eclipse

April 21, 2024 - General meeting will be held at Ironstone Meadery in Copperfield Plaza. We'll not only learn about bees from Kirk but get a chance to try mead, a beverage made from fermented honey!

April 30, 2024 - our first ever Walpurgis Celebration. Welcome Spring - Goodbye Winter. The bonfire will be compliments of our Danish friends held at their property, Sommerlyst Park.

Meeting Notes from 2/18/24

Due to the January weather event, we had to install Judy Etzler, Lorraine Johnson, and Martha Stickner into their respective Board positions. It is wonderful to have such dedicated members. Thank you.

We received 5 additional membership applications - Tom H, Steven P, Chrissy and Penny D, and Desiree D. We hope to have them initiated into the order by our April meeting since that is the last general meeting we have until September.

At the April meeting we will be voting on delegates to the District Convention in September. Think about being a representative of Svea. We are allowed 4.

Luther Memorial has offered us storage space on the 5th floor. It will allow us to keep our Lucia costumes and other items all in one place, as opposed to the creepy dungeon down in the basement, the hallway, and closets! WooHoo!

April 30th is the traditional day in Sweden to say Welcome Spring - Goodbye Winter. For the first time ever, Svea will host a Walpurgis Celebration with a bonfire at Sommerlyst Park, owned by the Danish Club. We're still getting plans organized but mark your calendars and get your hot dog sticks ready!

A deposit to the Shrine Club was given to secure May 19th as our banquet day. We will be celebrating 110 years in Vasa Order of America and I am proud to say we continue to move forward. Of course, there is always room for improvement but we are definitely on a good path. If you have any ideas that would make our celebration extra special, let one of the officers know.

Brian Davis, Svea auditor, submitted a written report and gave a verbal synopsis of his review of our finances. Thank you to Lorraine Johnson for keeping accurate bank records and making his job that much easier.

Lisa Davis has put her heart and soul into making sure that Svea is around for another 110 years. She submitted a written report on how each of us can help make that happen. Some of the suggestions:

- Put up flyers in businesses that permit you.
- Distribute the business cards to friends and neighbors who might ask about Svea.
- Give a shout out to Svea on your social media pages.
- Swag - items that reflect Sweden, Vasa, Scandinavia are great tools to start conversations - car magnets, dala horse pins, tote bags, tshirts

Thank you to the Larson's for supplying Fika.

March Fika is Judy and Lorraine.

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

Erie Scavenger Hunt: Roaming the Lake City \$13/person, your directions are set through your phone to find various locations around Erie. Teams are awarded points for interesting pictures and locations spotted. Approximately 1.5 hours and 2 miles of walking.

The Erie Zoo will be opening the first week in March under new direction.

Book Club - Bokklubb

We are still going to pursue Bokklubb! Never let it be said that Swedes are not persistent! Sarah & Gary Larson have graciously invited the book club to their home. We're just working on coming up with a date that works for everyone! In the meantime, here is a list of books by some interesting Swedish authors:

Sour Milk in Sheep's Wool by Helen Lundstrom Erwin

When I Was A Child by Vilhelm Moberg

Out Stealing Horses by Per Petterson

News from our Sister Lodges and PA District Lodge #9

Drott Lodge: On February 4th we got to hear about the Vikings "Gods and Myths of the Viking World: An Introduction to Norse Mythology" and then we had the big Swedish traditional event - Celebration of Semlan's Dag which was on Fat Tuesday, February 13th.

At the next meeting, we will all 'sail' on the historic Swedish American Line from Gothenburg to New York. We will have a very special decoration of our meeting room for the sailing. It will be a celebration of the great big Swedish steam ships of a bygone era. Several of our members sailed with some of the ships, or they have family and friends that sailed on them. It will be exciting to hear them tell some of their stories.

And then what many of us have been waiting a long time for - the Annual Drott Lodge Pea Soup Dinner. We will enjoy traditional Pea Soup with pancakes and plattar. We will also have the Swedish 'punsch' and we will of course sing to the punsch. Just like the Swede's have done for hundreds of years.

Nobel Monitor: Thank you to Rolf Bergman and Bruce Elfvin of Nobel-Monitor for reviewing our by laws and we can finally put that project to rest. Nobel-Monitor is in charge of setting up the District Convention in September. Lots of work goes in to making an event like this happen.

PA DL #9:

It won't be too early to start thinking about the District Convention that will be September 27-29, 2024. The District Board has contracted 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.

ReEnergize & ReBuild - our District commitment to retention and recruitment of members:

Visibility in our respective Lodge communities has been determined a priority. Supporting technology has been the focus recently.

For the past year, Wild Apricot has been the website member management platform for the District and 3 Lodges. The websites are similar in structure but the content is geared to each local lodge. Drott & Svea are utilizing the Affinipay feature on their websites allowing members to purchase items, pay dues, fees, and donations through their websites. Nobel Monitor will organize their web address so that feature can be enabled. Pat is presently working with Karen, District Treasurer, so that the District can utilize this feature as well, especially with the convention coming up in September.

We recently have installed the free version of Google Analytics on the Svea website. This is a powerful marketing tool that will tell us how many people (new and repeat) visit the website, how long they stay engaged, how they got to the website (through a search engine, organic search or typing in the web address, direct search), where in the world they are reaching out from, which tabs are visited most often, what devices people are using to access the website. This is only a short list of things GA is capable of, it will take awhile to fully appreciate what this tool can do and how it can improve our membership strategies. Reporting is done in real time.

Our Benevolence:

Pat has been in contact with The Erie City Mission. They are in need of men's items:

- shower shoes, flip flops
- underwear all sizes
- t-shirts large through 4xl
- sweatpants 2xl through 4xl

Kitchen items:

- individually wrapped snacks: chips, candy, chocolate
- water

You can bring items in to our meetings during March through May banquet.

Ädelmod, Sanning och Enighet
Generosity, Truth and Unity

