

# Skandia Nytt

Skandia Lodge #247, Vasa Order of America

Vol. 107, No. 02, February 2019

Chairman  
Ernie Mauritson

Vice Chairman  
Nel Solt

Past Chairman  
Beau Stocking

Secretary  
Betsy Cepielik

Financial Secretary  
Lori Wennbo

Treasurer  
Kathryn Martin

Cultural Leader  
Kathleen Demarjian

Chaplain  
Kathleen McGinley

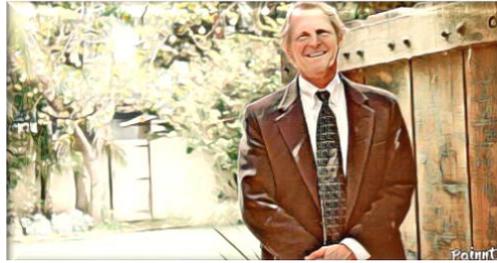
Master of Ceremonies  
Peter Lindgren

Assistant Master of  
Ceremonies  
Sonia Lent

Outer Guard  
Michael Lent

Auditors  
Lori Wennbo - 1 year  
Birgitta Roodsari - 2 year  
Beau Stocking- 3 year

Trustees  
Nel Solt - 1 year  
Patrick McGinley - 2 year  
Bob Solt - 3 year



## Message from Skandia's New Chairman

Well, I must say, as the newly elected Chairman of the Lodge, 2019 started on a high note with a wonderful dinner and social hour before an energetic first meeting of the new year. It is truly a delight to be a part of such an amazing and dedicated group of people.

Last year's Chairman, Beau Stocking, opened the meeting, as she has done for the past year, before turning the gavel (only symbolic, as we couldn't find the actual one) and responsibilities over to me and my fellow officers. Beau was an exceptional Chairman and I will do my best to continue on in the spirit and commitment that she, and the past Chairmen before her, have exemplified.

Don't you just cherish the Vasa traditions? I know I do. One of my favorites is the installation of the new officers. This past meeting, the presentation of the nominees before the members of our Lodge occurred. The "I do's" and "I will's" are very simple replies on their own,

but when said in response to hearing the responsibilities of each of the various positions, they take on a much deeper meaning.... and should. The newly elected officers and members of our Skandia Lodge, both old (years of service, not age!) and new, have pledged to keep it healthy and strong, through Truth and Unity. I have no doubt this will happen.

So, as I head out into the new year with the almost limitless power of a Vasa Lodge Chairman, over the millions of Vasa Skandia members... wow....get a grip, Ernie... of course, I am just kidding! With all sincerity thought, I am looking forward to having a great 2019 with our Lodge and the other Lodges.....upholding the old Vasa traditions and maybe, just maybe, adding some new ones of our own. Here's to a great year!

In Truth and Unity,

Ernie Mauritson

## Happenings This Month

### Birthdays

3 Jane Hendricks  
3 Ken Murphy  
4 Steve Rose  
8 Kathleen Demarjian  
9 Anne-Marie Stockdale  
11 Richard Eckfield  
11 Scott Shelley  
18 Eva Bergdahl Hunter  
26 Nicholas Martin  
28 Beau Stocking

### Business Meeting

(2nd Thursday)

February 14

7 pm Dinner

8 pm Meeting

105<sup>th</sup> District Convention

February 22-24

### Skandia Nytt

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by

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## The Art of Love: Valentine's Day in Sweden

You may be surprised to learn that there's nothing new about Saint Valentine's Day since the origin dates back to Ancient Rome. However, the way we celebrate it now is reasonably new. The holiday has twisted and changed throughout history with Sweden only fairly recently joined the love fest and started to celebrate the holiday in a way similar to America and Europe.

The tradition of giving flowers to loved ones on Valentine's Day originated in the 17th century when King Charles II of Sweden popularized "the language of flowers", or attaching conversationalist meanings to different types of flowers, throughout Europe. The most traditional type for Valentine's Day became the rose because of its association with the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite.

But how did Valentine's Day start in modern Sweden? The short answer is, "By selling flowers."

In the 1960's it was industrious flower-sellers that tried to push the idea of Valentine's Day, mimicking the American pitch in an effort to boost sales. Swedes being a practical lot, the bait didn't take for quite some years, as it has only become popular and more regularly celebrated in the 1980's.

Even today, Valentine's Day is not considered an official holiday. That said, the essence of Valentine's Day is the same as in America but on a much smaller scale from what I can tell. In Sweden, it is called "*alla hjärtans dag*," which means "All Hearts Day."

Despite being a holiday that began with selling flowers, Valentine's Day sales in Sweden pale in comparison to the amount of products dedicated to it in America. Our pharmacies, department and grocery stores are loaded with Valentine's Day themed merchandise as soon as Christmas is over. However, sales for cosmetics, perfumes, and jewelry for Valentine's Day are second only to Mother's Day. It is a day for lovers – when flowers, candies

and cards and a delicious meal represent the romance and emotion of a budding relationship. What more can you ask for?

Many Scandinavians also celebrate Valentine's Day by taking the opportunity to experience one of the [Scandinavia's natural phenomena](#)- Polar Nights.

The Polar Night occurs in the northernmost and southernmost regions of the Earth when the night lasts for more than 24 hours. This occurs only inside the polar circles. During the Polar Nights in northern [Scandinavia](#), there is darkness, or at most twilight, depending on the location. Far from a period of absolute darkness, the Polar Night is a time of beautiful colors and soft, indirect light. Even during the darkest hours, the landscape is covered in snow, beautifully reflecting the light of the stars above.

In Kiruna, Sweden, the polar nights last for about 28 "days." The window of time of the polar nights is also the perfect time to observe another Scandinavia natural phenomenon - the [northern lights \(Aurora Borealis\)](#).

Kiruna, in the heart of Swedish Lapland, is home of the world famous ICEHOTEL, the largest underground iron ore mine in the world, Abisko National Park, and is one of the world's top rated aurora borealis destination where the Northern Lights can be seen nearly every clear night. In fact, Visitabisko.com has an aurora hunting expedition! Yes, for 695 SKr, you can snuggle up next to your loved one as professional guides transport you to different viewing locations, many of which are on lakes and rivers. This gives you the chance of seeing the auroras in the sky and reflecting in the polished ice of winter lakes.

Nonstop flights from Stockholm to Kiruna take 1.5 hours and currently cost \$101. Plus, I checked, there ARE seats available on the February 14<sup>th</sup> expedition! What are you waiting for?

Kathleen Demarjian

## Fundraiser for a Good Cause



Our Melissa Demarjian has a fast approaching clarinet recital on Sunday, January 26, 2019 at the Los Altos United Methodist Church in Long Beach at 3 pm.

For those who want to donate and can't attend, an online fundraiser has been set up:

<https://www.plumfund.com/travel-fund/melissa-audition-trip>

Melissa is applying for the Artist Diploma, a type of performance certificate that will help her further develop as a solo clarinetist, as well as help her achieve a dream come true and ultimate goal of traveling and performing around the world as an accomplished musician.

Each school Melissa has applied to requires traveling to their respective campuses for auditions that will take place in Denver, Montreal, and the UK.

The fundraiser will assist in covering significant travel costs.

The link is open until March 31<sup>st</sup> and will include updates on the site to share various recordings of Melissa's performances and progress on what she hopes to achieve.

### Bob Solt Update

We are relieved to share that Bob is back home with Nel following a procedure to remove cancer from his throat.

*Det finns ingenting på Jorden som bör prisas mer än sann vänskap.*



*Fika Time*



See what's going on in the District  
at: [vasaDL15.org](http://vasaDL15.org)

# The Night Sweden Saved My Job

The sad decline of Kmart reminded me of this memory...

As a teenager, I worked as a cook in a Kmart diner in Acton, Massachusetts that served basic food at a price people could afford. Our customers were locals: cash-strapped families, the elderly on pensions, harried shoppers who didn't feel like cooking. To prepare for dinner we closed lunch at 3 pm and reopened at 6.

Friday nights were our busiest time, even in winter as it was then. We offered a fish fry for \$7.99, as well as a blue plate special posted on a big letter board at the entrance. It was my job to come in early to prep for the dinner rush.

The diner was between managers (one was on vacation for two weeks and another had recently quit), so we ran things ourselves and the vibe was *relaxed*.

I got along well with the head waitress, Caroline, and liked to prank her. On my way in for this particular Friday shift, I stopped to change the blue plate special on the board, figuring Caroline would have a chuckle when she came in.

By 6:15 that night, we already had a line out the door for the fish plate and the kitchen was in high gear. That's when the head waitress came rushing in, "Hon & Plings? Hon & Plings? Mike, what the %@\*! are 'Hon & Plings?!?'"

That's what I had put under Blue Plate Special on the board. Caroline and her crew had been

running behind and never stopped to check or change it.

Now, people at five tables were interested in ordering Hon & Plings.

"Tell them it was a silly joke," I said.

"These guys are regulars. It's 12 degrees outside and they are in no mood for jokes. We'll be fired if word gets back to the manager."

The manager on vacation was named Madeline and when she was upset, which was a lot (hence the vacation), she made a habit of banging metal spoons on the steel counters, so we had nicknamed her "the Iron Madeline."

"Mike, you need to figure out, 'What are Hon & Plings?'"

Sixty panic-stricken seconds followed where I glanced at the cooked Polish sausages, boiled potatoes and julienne carrots that were the actual blue plate special and the beef barley soup left over from lunch, then motioned Caroline over.

"Put two periods over the 'o' in 'Hon' to make 'Hön' because tonight is Swedish Night. We are serving a hearty Scandinavian-inspired stew that's kind of like a jambalaya."

"Hön & Plings?"

"Say it with more feeling," I said. "But, yes, that's what we're serving."

Everything was diced or cubed, tossed into a pot for a fast simmer, then ladled into individual crock soup bowls. Some grated cheese broiled on top and voila!: Hön & Plings — a dish born of desperation worthy of Anthony Bourdain.

An hour later, I came out get a drink. I could hear the waitresses fanned out around the restaurant, warming to the task as they described "tonight's special" in glowing detail.

That festive evening, our patrons ate like Vikings while discussing their long lost Norse roots.

We sold dozens of orders of Hön & Plings.

A week later, Iron Madeline was back from a vacation of hitting puppies with spoons. Since her return, several diners had asked whether they might order Hön & Plings off-menu and failing that, wondered when was the next Swedish night. Now I was summoned with a clang of metal on metal to explain myself.

"Oh, I was just trying to shake things up and create some excitement. You know how it is, middle of winter and all that. I think we just missed you," I answered.

"Yeah," she said, looking at me with deep suspicion.

"Well, that was certainly something pretty ballsy to do on a Friday. You're lucky you pulled it off."

I shrugged.

"You'll have to make this dish of yours for me sometime."

"Sure," I smiled.

Not long after, I graduated from high school and left the diner. I heard that for a while people continued to request the fun-to-say, weirdly tasty Hön & Plings.

Michael Lent