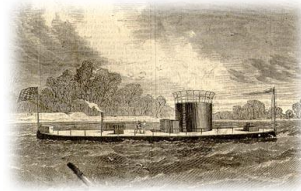


Monitor Lodge #218

Sacramento, California

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December (December) 2025

Our November FIKA meeting was spent enjoying each other's company. We started the meeting draping the charter in memory of Norris Anderson. We then reinstated Hans Fors, a former Monitor member and then followed with a short business meeting which included determining the need for liquor license for meetings during the first quarter of 2026. We also entertained a nomination for Honorary Life Membership for Marianne Ek and closed out the meeting with a cultural presentation on the competitive Swedish Dance world by members John Hingtgen and Sandi Kesler.

Upcoming Monitor events. We will gather on Saturday, December 6th for our annual Jul celebration although due to unforeseen circumstances we are scaling it back to a Jul smörgåsbord (potluck) so a bit more casual. We will follow that with our annual St. Lucia celebration the following Friday. The new year sees the commencement of our monthly activities as listed in our 2026 calendar starting with the installation of our 2026 officers in January.

Important reminder: Our 2026 dues are due on January 1, 2026 and delinquent on March 31st. Remember that the yearly dues are \$50.00 per active member. Please make checks payable to Monitor Lodge #218 and mail your dues to:

Monitor Lodge #218
c/o Johanna Benker, Financial Secretary
6040 Plum Canyon Lane
Roseville, CA 95747

We also ask that you consider making a donation to our scholarship fund when you send in your renewal check in honor or in memory of a loved one or just because.

2025 Calendar of events (dates subject to change)

December 6th - Saturday -
**Jul smörgåsbord and
Glögg party**

December 12th - Friday -
St. Lucia program

2026 Calendar of events (dates subject to change)

January 9th - Friday -
Installation of officers

February 6th - Friday - **Pea
Soup & Pancakes**

March 6th - Friday - **Corned
Beef & Cabbage**

April 11th - Monitor's **114th
Anniversary luncheon**

April 24-26 - **District
convention** location TBD

May 9th - **Kraftskiva** at
location TBD

June 5th - Friday -
Midsommar at IOOF Hall

June 6th - Saturday - District
Sweden Day - location TBD

July - no meeting

August 8th - Saturday -
Kraftskiva

September 4th - Friday -
Nominations - 2027
officers

November 6th - Friday -
FIKA- elections

December 5th - Saturday -
Julbord and Glögg party

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Annual Program book updates. **IMPORTANT** - Please contact Brian Horsfield, Yvonne Magneheim and Chuck Johnson ASAP with any needed changes as we will be printing the 2026 Program book in late December.

A grattis på födelsedagen to our birthday celebrants for **December**: Jenny Cavanaugh, Laila Harris*, Adam Johnson, Carol Nezewich* and Nils Wright (* denotes member 75 years of age or older).

A reminder that our Scholarship committee is accepting applications for our 2026 scholarship. The annual VASA scholarship deadlines are fast approaching. The Grand Lodge 2026 application is due no later than February 15, 2026 while Monitor Lodge's and Golden Gate District's applications are due no later than **April 1, 2026**. Applicants will find all the necessary information and application forms on our website at:

<https://www.monitorlodgesacramento.org/membership/scholarship/>

Read the instructions carefully as the requirements are different for each scholarship.

Did you know _____ about Monitor Lodge? This occasional section features factoids about Monitor Lodge and VASA. This month we have a few pictures of Monitor's participation in "Swedish Heritage Days" held at the Turlock Scandi-Fest event in 1998.



Swedish Heritage Exhibit 1998 food display - Eivor Pfannkuch & Margaret Carlson

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Swedish Heritage Exhibit 1998 food display - Eivor Pfannkuch & unknown Monitor member



Swedish Heritage Exhibit 1998 food display - Eivor Pfannkuch



Swedish Heritage Exhibit 1998 food display - Eivor Pfannkuch

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Current financial report (summary) as of November from our Financial Secretary and Treasurer. We continue to be comfortably in the black but with the demise of the Scandinavian Festival we need to explore other opportunities to raise monies to support Monitor's activities and scholarships as our funds have decreased by about \$5,000 since November 2024.

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Children's Club</u>	<u>Nål och Tråd</u>	<u>Scholarship</u>	<u>Totals</u>
\$8,644.09	\$93.77	\$5,189.37	\$9,054.62	\$22,981.85

How good is your Swedish vocabulary? If you want to brush up on your Swedish you have several options. We have Monitor's in-person/ZOOM Swedish language classes led by Will Hanley. In addition to the on-line tutorials utilized by some of Will's students at Innovative Languages (<https://www.innovativelanguage.com/>) you will find Swedish vocabulary and lessons in Nordstjernan (<http://www.nordstjernan.com/>) and in the Swedish edition of The Local (<https://www.thelocal.se/>). You can also get a language fix from bi-weekly podcasts at: <https://shows.acast.com/the-newbie-guide-to-sweden-podcast>.

Today's word of the day, **oxveckorna**, is provided by the [January 7th, 2025](#) edition of *The Local* is a word that translate literally as "ox weeks", and is used to describe the period roughly between New Year and Easter devoid of public holidays, which leaves you working like an ox.

There's no exact definition of how many weeks *oxveckorna* refers to, and it used to also refer to similar holiday-free periods during the autumn or following midsummer.

Sweden's most recent public holiday fell on January 6th, *trettondag jul*. The next one won't be until Good Friday, which falls on April 18th this year, giving Swedes more than three months without a public holiday.

In addition to this, the fun and lights of Christmas are over, so Swedes – especially in the north of the country – have months of slogging through bad weather and dark days with no celebrations to lighten the mood until Easter.

This might be one of the reasons so many people take *sportlov* off around mid-February to escape to the ski slopes.

But where does the term come from?

In Sweden's old agricultural society, farmers weren't lucky enough to have the 25 days of annual leave Swedish workers expect today, so public holidays were one of the few chances for a break from hard, physical labour. The period after Christmas, devoid of

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public holidays, was especially difficult, as farmers had to work through the dark, cold months, "like an ox".

It was also the time of year where farmers used oxen to plough their fields in preparation for sowing crops in spring.

The period between midsummer and Christmas was equally difficult, as it covers the busy harvest period, without the motivation of seeing the light return and the weather improve to keep you going.

Nowadays, many Swedes escaped *oxveckorna* by getting on the nearest plane and heading to Thailand for most of January. Not everyone can afford this luxury, but planning a couple of days of annual leave for this period might help if you're struggling.

Example sentences:

En kort promenad i vinterljuset kan lätta upp under oxveckorna. A short walk in the winter light can help during the ox weeks.

Jag hatar verkligen oxveckorna, allt känns så segt och tungt och det är så långt till våren. I really hate the ox weeks, everything feels so difficult and heavy and spring is so far away.

For the good of the order: It is never too late to refresh your memory about some of the less visible history and resources available to members. Just go to Monitor's website (no login required) at <https://www.monitorlodgesacramento.org/> and explore all the different pulldown menus. Njut av!



Editor: Chuck Johnson

LOOSE PARTS DAVE BLAZEK

