

News from Vasaloppet's Veteran Club

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Annual meeting this autumn

The Veteran Club's annual meeting is planned for Saturday, September 5 in Mora Parken and further information will arrive in Newsletter 3/2020.

Should the current restrictions from the Public Health Agency of Sweden regarding the ongoing pandemic remain in place we will, as soon as possible, inform about how we will organize the annual meeting.

Veterantinget

The Veterantinget meeting was held on February 29 at Andreasgården close to Mora Church, as in previous years. The meeting gathered about eighty participants.

John-Erik Eggens opened the meeting with a birch trumpet fanfare, chairman Lennarth Larsson welcomed everyone and started with brief information about the programme, leaving the stand in favour of Pia Hultgren from Swedish Television. She gave some background on this year's winter, noting that we've had the warmest winter in living memory, leading to a lack of snow. Pia predicted warmer winds and heavy snowfall from Saturday night and on, with high probability of snow for large parts of Sunday. The temperature would keep around -1 to -3 degrees Celsius at the start place with slowly rising temperatures during the day, probably up to a few degrees above freezing in Mora during the afternoon. Pia's predictions were exactly right! It started to snow in Mora just as predicted on Saturday night and on Sunday morning there had been between 15 and 20 cm of light snow. Snowfall continued during part of the day.

Lecture

Chairman Lennarth then briefly informed about the Facebook page "Ask a Veteran" and Vasaloppet veteran 557 Tommy Bogg gave some thoughts on the topic of "Sports and health", after which Birger Fält took the stand. Birger, formerly an honorary member, now Vasaloppet Veteran 989, accounted the history of Vasaloppet in 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960 (when our own veteran 76 John-Erik Eggens got third place). Birger continued with Vasaloppet in 1970 with the two East Germans Gerhard Grimmer and Gert-Dietmar Klause on the starting line. They would, four years later, win the 4x10 km relay at the World Championships in Falun. Klause would also win Vasaloppet in 1975. In Vasaloppet 1970 they could not compete with Lars-Arne Bölling, IFK Mora, who won with a time of 5:08:38. It was IFK Mora's first win in 17 years after Mora-Nisse's ninth and final victory in 1953.

Birger completed his historical account with the fact that Vasaloppet was cancelled in 1990 for the third time, due to lack of snow.

After Birger came occupational therapist David Engstedt from the Paliesiaus clinic outside Vilnius in Lithuania, who gave an interesting account of the clinic's work. Through personalized support they help maintain physical and mental well-being at an advanced age, and can also assist those who wish to improve their performance.

After this presentation, Ulrika Fager, head of the department of Communication and Public Affairs for the oil company Preem talked about the big sustainability efforts Preem is launching based on forest raw materials.

Weather challenges

Eva-Lena Frick, Vasaloppet's CEO, welcomed everyone to the current Vasaloppet and started by talking about the great challenges that this year's race has given the organization. Eva-Lena concluded by commenting on the snowfall that seemed to be arriving in the nick of time, so to speak, and couldn't help noting, despite great joy, that for the organizers this meant "that we now have a long night of hard work to look forward to!"

New 60-racers

Eva-Lena then addressed the present and newly minted 60-race veteran, Vasaloppet veteran 32, Börje Karlsson, Landsbro IF, looking back on their long friendship as active skiers with roots in Småland, Börje in Landsbro and Eva-Lena in adjacent Sävsjö. Börje's daughter Ulrika Karlsson, who has accompanied Börje along the Vasaloppet track several times on his attempts to complete his 60th Vasaloppet, was present at the meeting and performed the now well-known Koppången as an homage to her father, accompanied on guitar by John-Erik Eggens. Attention was also brought to three present newly made 50-race veterans, namely 248 Stig Johansson, Skene, 276 Gunnar Olsson, Stora Tuna and 282 Arne Lund, Kungshamn.

Vasaloppet's efforts

Mats Rylander of Vasaloppet accounted Vasaloppet's efforts leading up to the Vasaloppet centennial in 2022, and the celebration of the 100th Vasaloppet, calculated to take place in 2024. These efforts stretch across the entire span of 2020-2023.

Mats mentioned that two important mottos for Vasaloppet are "A healthier Sweden" and "Vasaloppet is the engine of exercise in Sweden".

With thanks

As a final note on the agenda the two veteran teams in Stafettvasan the previous day were thanked for their efforts and received their Stafettvasan medals.

One of the veteran teams, with veterans 854 Anders Claesson, 560 Thomas Almqvist, 297 Olle Viklund, 577 Thure Andersson and 943 Karl-Gustav Björk, skied down to Mora with a time of 6:28:12! This is the fastest that a team consisting only of veterans has completed Stafettvasan since the first veteran team participated in 2013. The average age of the team was 74 years.

After these thanks the 2020 Veterantinget meeting concluded with chairman Lennarth Larsson wishing participants luck for the Sunday Vasaloppet and invited everyone to a customary lunch with pasta bolognese and good company.

Photo description: *The fast Stafettvasan 2020 team with, from left to right, 854 Anders Claesson, 580 Thomas Almqvist, 943 Karl-Gustaf Björk, 577 Thure Andersson and 387 Olle Viklund, received their medals at Veterantinget the day after the race.*

New Vasaloppet veterans!

With the "real" Vasaloppet concluding this year's Winter Week, thirty-two new Vasaloppet veterans have qualified! The total number of Vasaloppet veterans thereby goes up to 1,091. Three of these thirty-two new veterans are ladies and one man has Norwegian citizenship. Welcome everyone to the group!

New 40-racers

The following ten veterans qualified as 40-race veterans:

- 625 Sören Holmberg, Leksands SLK
- 683 Christer Liljegren, Stenkyrka IF
- 628 Peter Sundelin, Bankeryd Skid och Motion
- 688 Göran Johnsson, Landsbro IF
- 670 Arne Johansson, IBM Club Sweden
- 679 Ingemar Ångman, Morgongåva SK
- 544 Åke Wingskog, Bortans IK
- 685 Kurt Andersson, Sätra IF
- 588 Sune Andersson, Främmestads IK
- 663 Sten Andersson, Kimstads GOIF

Among these special attention is due Värmland native Åke Wingskog who, in his prime, came second in Vasaloppet 1975, just after East German relay World Champion Gert-Dietmar Klaus.

New 50-racers

The following skiers completed their 50th Vasaloppet/Öppet Spår during Vasaloppet's Winter Week 2020:

- 276 Gunnar Olsson, Stora Tuna IK
- 191 Hans-Åke Christiansson, Gamleby OK
- 279 Lars Persson, Treby IF
- 248 Stig Johansson, Skene Sim o IS
- 282 Arne Lund, Trollhättans SOK

Börje Karlsson, our new 60-racer

As presented in the Veterantinget report, the Veteran Club got a new 60-race member this year as Vasaloppet veteran 32 Börje Karlsson, Landsbro IF in Småland, after a few attempts could finally conclude his 60th race going Sälen-Mora!

A fantastic achievement by the tough Småland native; one that will be very difficult for others to reach! Börje is now the second 60-race participant beside Vasaloppet veteran 14 Bengt Eriksson, Sälen's IF, who's been sitting alone on the "60-race throne" since 2013. Both have been astounding in their own ways; Bengt Eriksson through a 60-year series of finishing times in Vasaloppet that not even top Vasaloppet skiers can match, and Börje who's dealt with illness in later years but still returned to complete this feat at age eighty-six!

First Vasaloppet 1956

Our newsletter's Småland correspondent has received this background information from Börje in a short phone interview in the middle of April:

"I skied my first Vasaloppet in 1956 and since then I've skied 57 Vasaloppet in an uninterrupted series. I've been faithful to my club Landsbro IF through the years and 'skied double' in the Vasaloppet track many years, participating in both Öppet Spår and Vasaloppet the same year, so I've actually started Vasaloppet 71 times and I finished 69 of those times.

"My fastest time was 5:13 and that was with wooden skis! My best placement is 88th; one year I was 32nd in Gopshus but faltered at the end. I've also participated in countless 'Smålands-DM' and taken many team and relay wins with Landsbro IF, remaining active in the club's ski section since 1955.

"I've worked in the sawmill industry all these years. I started at a small sawmill but was part of taking over Borohus AB's sawmill in Landsbro in the 1980s from HSB who then owned it, and after that I worked with significantly bigger production of sawed wood products.

"I'm sure I'll keep skiing a fair bit; a short trip or two whenever the snow falls. When you've been doing it your whole life it's hard not to ski when the snow comes," Börje concludes.

Photo description: Börje in his own Vasaloppet museum at home.

Updated discounts from our partners

This past autumn/winter we looked over and renewed the deals we have with certain facilities and our benefits are listed in the updated notice. With some exceptions these deals apply until 2022-12-31.

Membership benefits and discounts

We currently have partnership deals with Stadium sports stores and eight facilities from Frösö Park, Östersund and Gällö Skidtunnel in the north to Skidome/Kviberg Park Hotel & Conference, Gothenburg in the south. Take the opportunity to use these facilities for both training and recreation. By paying the Veteran Club membership fee and by showing that you are a paying member upon arrival you can benefit from the following discounts:

Stadium: Discount on purchases in Mora and Sälen during the Vasaloppet Winter Week with the same percentage as you have completed Vasaloppet years as a veteran.

Frösö Park: 15% off standard prices for accommodation including breakfast for members and companions in the same room/cabin all year round. Cannot be combined with other discounts.

Gällö Ski Tunnel: 30% off standard prices (both one-day and multi-day cards) for skiing in the tunnel. 20% off standard prices for accommodation in the holiday village.

Orsa Grönklitt and Mora Parken: 10% off standard accommodation prices for members and companions in the same room/cabin (though not during high season weeks such as Christmas/New Year, sports holidays, Easter and more). Cannot be combined with other discounts.

Högbo Brukshotell and Högbo Bruk: 20% discount off standard accommodation prices including breakfast buffet during low season for members and companions in the same room. Cannot be combined with other discounts. 30% discount off standard prices for skiing in the artificially frozen ski tracks at times when fees are charged. Discount applies in addition to other discounts (groups, pensioners etc.) that might be applicable.

Torsby Skidtunnel & Sportcenter: 30% discount off standard prices (one-day and multi-day cards) for skiing in the ski tunnel. Cannot be combined with other discounts.

Täby Konstsnöspår: 15% discount off the standard price of seasonal cards.

First Hotel Billingeus: Up to 30% off standard prices for accommodation including breakfast for members and companions in the same room. Cannot be combined with other discounts.

Kviberg Skidanläggning and Kviberg Park Hotel & Conference: 20% discount off standard prices for skiing in Kviberg Skidanläggning, both for one-day visits and annual cards. A one-time fee applies for an armband for 10-year cards and annual cards. 10% off standard prices for accommodation including parking space in a heated garage for members and companions in the same room. For overnight stays you need to book well in advance of arrival! Work with our partners!

Täby Konstsnöspår

The Veteran Club has recently made a deal with Täby Konstsnöspår north-west of Stockholm, similar to the deals we have with the other facilities. You'll find more on this deal and the facility in the next issue.

Photo description: Skidome/Kviberg Park Hotel & Conference, Gothenburg in the south.

Registration for the Summer and Winter Week

The plan was previously to give information on registration for this year's Summer Week and next year's Winter Week in this issue of the newsletter.

Due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis registration for the Summer Week has been closed until further notice while we wait to see if the Summer Week can take place at all! We are now encouraging all Vasaloppet veterans to take part in the information published continuously on Vasaloppet's own website!

Summer Week 2020

Below you'll find registration fees and the veteran code you'll use if registration opens up at a later time:

For the Summer Week, please use the code you've received in the email newsletter. You will then have a 20% discount. In other words the prices for you as a veteran are:

Cykelvasan 30	365 SEK
Cykelvasan 45	520 SEK
Cykelvasan ÖS	955 SEK

Winter Week 2021

For the Winter Week 2021, use the code you've received via email with the newsletter and the prices you'd pay will then become:

Vasaloppet 30	330 SEK
Tjejvasan	445 SEK
ÖS Sunday	680 SEK
ÖS Monday	0 SEK
Vasaloppet 45	430 SEK
Vasaloppet	945 SEK

Free starts

New veterans start their 31st race completely free. Those who have skied their 40th race can start for free in their 41st race on the Vasaloppet Sunday, March 7, or Öppet Spår Sunday, February 28. The 50th race is also free and **when you have skied 50 races you start free in all races moving forward!**

How to register for a free race is explained in detail on page 4 of the previous newsletter 2020:1.

The **Startklar** insurance has changed its name and is now known as Folksam
Motionsloppsförsäkring Bas and Motionsloppsförsäkring Stor.

Bas insures you for illness and accident and costs 155 SEK per year. The larger Folksams
Motionsloppsförsäkring Stor covers all the same as Bas plus that if you cannot start as planned due to illness or injury you will get your start fee back if you can provide a valid doctor's note. Stor costs 275 SEK per year.