

Swedes honor Martha Westberg

A Southfield woman who will be 100 years old on Dec. 23 will be the guest of honor when Swedish Club of Detroit hosts its Christmas dinner in Finnish Cultural Center.

Martha Westberg, who has just recently sold her home to live with her daughter-in-law, Sophia Lindgren, is a charter member of the Swedish Club's Founders Society in Detroit, and a 50-year charter member of Gosta Saga Chapter of Vasa Lodge in N.Y.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Westberg lived independently in her Redford Township home until late in 1979, when she was 88.

She's led an up-and-down life and is now the sole survivor of her immediate family. But the optimistic lady's philosophy is based in a Swedish motto, which translates to "Tomorrow will be better."

As to her longevity, she says simply, "God willed it."

She is a faithful listener of news

broadcasts, tunes in regularly for WMZK's Swedish Hour, enjoys the music of Lawrence Welk, and all opera.

MRS. WESTBERG was born in Stockholm, one of four children whose father was a goldsmith and mother a restaurateur.

She had two sons from her marriage to Walfrid Lindgren; one died as a baby. Her son Carl Lindgren died at age 79 and is remembered by members of the Swedish Club "as one of the most prominent members of the Swedish community in Detroit."

Carl Lindgren and his mother sailed on the SS Grisholm's maiden voyage to the U.S. at the invitation of her brother, Adolph. But when the ship arrived, there was so one there to meet them.

It wasn't until 15 years later that the immigrant learned her brother had died in the interim in Milwaukee, Wisc.

Fortunately she had been corre-

sponding with a Swedish girl friend who lived with an aunt and uncle in New York, who took the young mother and her son to live with them.

A subsequent job as a cook for a family in New York City led her to be introduced to a recent widower, Gust Westberg, whom she married in 1927.

The couple rented rooms as a source of income for a while, then moved to Jamestown, N.Y. where they rented a small farmhouse and planted pines to sell as Christmas trees.

The population in Jamestown at the time was about 90 percent Swedish, so Mrs. Westberg remembers a great many lifelong friends made there.

THE WESTBERGS made one trip back to Sweden, just prior to moving to Michigan, on the S.S. Grisholm again, this time when the ship was making its final voyage.

It wasn't until Mrs. Westberg was 76

years old that the couple moved into their first new house.

"I never had had a new house," she said. "For once I liked to have a new home."

Gust Westberg died in 1970, and the widow was adamant about remaining as independent as possible for as long as possible.

She has three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

She has been a regular guest at the Swedish Club's Christmas dinners for the past 24 years.

The club's dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Dec. 19 in the Finnish Cultural Center, 35200 Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Members are using the center for all of its activities until the new facilities, on Freedom Road and Ruth Road, in Farmington Hills are completed.

Reservations are being accepted by Dorothy Lind, 476-4599.



Martha Westberg, who will be 100 years old this month, takes the seat reserved for the guest of honor when Swedish Club of Detroit holds its Christmas dinner in Finnish Cultural Center Dec. 19. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

'Visions of Sugar Plums' staged in dream images

"Visions of Sugar Plums" is the first full-scale production to be staged by singers, dancers, actors, musicians and gymnasts who are students at Dance & Music Stand in Farmington Hills.

The original story by Andy Hurley will be presented at 7 p.m. Dec. 13 in Novi High School, 24062 Tenth Road.

"This is not to be confused with a

dance recital," said Linda Neely, co-

owner and operator of Dance & Music

Stand with Dolores Hurley. "We have a cast of 40 and are co-sponsored by Pas-sic Chamber Players in connection with our voice and instrument teachers."

The story takes place the night before Christmas in a family living room. When the tree is trimmed and the children put to bed each dreams of his own wish for Christmas.

Each of the children's dreams

comprise one act of the show the students have been working to put together since September. The entire ensemble, with full choreography, join in the grand finale when the Christmas toys come alive on Christmas morning.

Featured performers in the play are the members of Scherzando Wind Quintet.

"IT'S A CHRISTMAS fantasy for all ages," Ms. Neely said. "We even will

have a harp on stage. I mention that because harps and harp players are not so common."

Mrs. Hurley and Caroline Best teach dance at the school. Karen Onkka is voice teacher and Wayman Ezell instructs piano.

Pre-sale tickets, at \$4 each, are available in Dance & Music Stand, 38429 Grand River. There will be ticket sales at the door.

Ski season begins with clinic

Professional ski instructors are "thinking snow" as they prepare a free Cross Country Ski Clinic scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8 in Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.

The clinic will be led by Louise Goodman, member of the Central Professional Ski Instructors Association.

Ms. Goodman is also director of Skinny Skis, Inc., the only organized cross country ski school in the area. It operates at the Beechwoods Touring Center, 9 Mile and Beach Rd.

The clinic will cover proper skis and attire, how to select the correct ski boots and poles, touring vs. track skiing, trail safety and Nordic ski film.

Prospective students may sign up for lessons Thursday evening and benefit

from group rates through the Farmington Community Center even though each class is limited to 10 students per instructor.

Classes are open to all family members 8 years or older and are all held on the Beechwoods grounds. Two class sessions are \$10 with skiers own equipment. Students may rent poles, skis and boots for an additional charge.

Beginners may sign up for lessons Friday, Jan. 9 and 16 at 6:30-7:30 p.m. or 8-9 p.m.

The next set of lessons will be Jan. 23 and 30 with beginners meeting from 6:30-7:30 p.m. and intermediate skiers gathering from 8-9 p.m. A third set of classes will meet Friday, Feb. 6 and 13 at the same times.

JEANETTE ROWE, Beechwoods ski instructor, insures that all teachers are certified and know all the latest up-to-date techniques.

She adds that beginners will be taught the proper handling of the equipment, how to fall safely, how to coordinate arm and leg movements, how to begin moving on level ground, and the technique of going downhill and up again.

Intermediate students, who must have snow plow experience, will learn how to turn on both level and sloped ground. They will continue to gain experience going down and up hills and be introduced to "double poling." They will learn the tricks of skiing with speed and maintaining control on dips and bumps in the terrain.



Eight-year-old Ray Noble and 9-year-old Tiffany Hubbard take the roles of Raggedy Ann and Andy

when Dance & Music Stand stages "Visions of Sugar Plums" Dec. 13. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)



In Noah's ark

Debate on how to build Noah's ark goes on between Rob Anning (at left) of Farmington, who takes the part of Shem; Mike McSweeney of Farmington Hills, who plays Japheth; and Southfielder Howard Waterstone, who portrays Ham in the Family Players production of "Two by Two." The musical version of the age-old story continues at 8 p.m. Satur-

day and 2 and 6:30 p.m. Sunday in the Jewish Community Center, Drake and Maple roads, West Bloomfield. The players are made up of the members of 30 families in Detroit's northwest suburbs. Tickets are available at the door. Group rates are available by calling the center, 661-1000.

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