



NEWS RELEASE

**Kalmar Nyckel Foundation
Lecture Series**

**Frederick Hocker, Ph.d.
Director of Research, Vasa Museum
“Raising the *Vasa*: Exploring Sweden’s Most Famous Ship”**



Chase Center on the Riverfront

May 13, 2009

6:00-8:30pm

Wilmington, Delaware, April 16, 2009 – The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, in keeping with its educational mission to enrich the lives of students of all ages, today announced its second lecture in a new series designed to engage the intellectual interest of all Delawareans. For its second lecture, the Foundation will present Dr. Frederick Hocker, the Vasa Museum’s Director of Research, which will take place at the Chase Center on the Riverfront on May 13, 2009. “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to bring Fred Hocker to the greater Wilmington community,” said Samuel Heed, the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation’s Director of Education.

“Dr. Hocker comes to us all the way from Stockholm, Sweden,” Heed noted, “where he is the Director of Research at the world famous Vasa Museum. Dr. Hocker is one of the world’s leading authorities on maritime archaeology. He has been directing the archeological research at the Vasa Museum since 2003, where he is responsible for documenting and publishing all the archaeological finds associated with the extraordinary *Vasa*.” The *Vasa* is reputed to be the biggest single object that has ever been preserved, a monumental undertaking, one that continues to delight and surprise all sorts of historians and archaeologists.

“The *Vasa* is one of the rarest of rare treasures,” Heed added, “an intact warship from 1628, salvaged and raised from the bottom of Stockholm harbor in 1961 – after spending some 333 years on the bottom of the sea.” At the time of the salvage operation in 1961, the Vasa Museum reports, there was great uncertainty whether the old wooden ship would remain in one piece. It did, thanks to the expert work of a team of Sweden’s Navy heavy divers, under the leadership of Per Edvin Fälting. The final stage of the salvage operation was broadcast live on Swedish television, something that was very unusual at the time. All of Sweden held its collective breath, as the “proud royal warship *Vasa*” broke the surface at 9:03 am on April 24, 1961. (*See* Vasa Museum website at www.vasamuseet.se)

Heed added that “the back story to the 1628 sinking of the mighty warship *Vasa*, the pride of the Swedish navy – on its maiden voyage and in front of thousands of spectators, including foreign diplomats, who filled the beaches surrounding Stockholm harbor – ranks alongside the *Titanic* for infamous maritime disasters.” Of the 150 officers and crew on board when she heeled over and sank, 30 to 50 men died in the disaster. When the *Vasa* was salvaged in 1961, the remains of 25 skeletons were found by archaeologists.

Frederick Hocker has been leading maritime archaeological excavations all over the world for twenty years. Beside the *Vasa*, he has directed research and documentation for the Civil War ironclad U.S.S. *Monitor*, the 17th-century Swedish warship *Kronan*, the remains of a 9th-century Byzantine shipwreck off Turkey, a 19th-century schooner wreck in Lake Champlain, an 18th-century pilot sloop near Savannah, Georgia, and a 16th-century Iberian ship off Bermuda, among many others.

Before joining the Vasa Museum in 2003, Dr. Hocker was the Senior Researcher and Research Coordinator for the National Museum of Denmark Centre for Maritime

Archaeology. He has been the *Sara W. and George O. Yanni* Associate Professor of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University, a Visiting Faculty Member at the Sea Education Association in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, a Research Associate at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, and an Archaeologist at the Bermuda Maritime Museum. Dr. Hocker holds his Ph.d. in Anthropology and Archaeology from Texas A&M University, a Diploma in History from the University of Cambridge, England, and his B.A. in History from Middlebury College.

“For anyone interested in maritime history, in archaeology, or in historic preservation,” Heed noted, “getting the chance to speak with and to listen to Dr. Frederick Hocker will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Dr. Hocker’s Open Forum gathering at the end of the lecture will be a special treat for all sailors, historians, and maritime enthusiasts.”

- ❖ **A Reception in honor of Dr. Frederick Hocker will be held at the Chase Center on the Riverfront from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.**
- ❖ **The Lecture will be held from 7:00 to 7:45 pm.**
- ❖ **Dr. Hocker will hold an Open Forum for questions and discussion from 7:45 to 8:30 pm.**
- ❖ **Advanced Ticket Sales \$8.00 for members, \$10.00 for non-members**
- ❖ **At the door, Tickets \$15.00**
- ❖ **Student Tickets with Student ID: \$5.00**

The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation preserves and teaches Delaware’s unique maritime history and multicultural legacy as it relates to the region’s economic, industrial, ecological, and cultural development. The recreation of the Kalmar Nyckel, a 10-year project undertaken by local volunteers, was directed by Master Builder Allen Rawl and launched in May 1997. The recreation was made possible in large part by the vision and generosity of the Delaware General Assembly, then Governor (now Senator) Thomas R. Carper, Tatiana Copeland, and Wilmington’s Riverfront Development Corporation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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