



The John Ericsson Society Inc.

NEW YORK

NEWSLETTER

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Letter from the Editor

It is amazing what one person alone can accomplish. John Ericsson for one may be famous for only a handful of works, but the hundreds of designs that he made during his lifetime are astounding. Society President Leif Brisfjord mentions in his article "John Ericsson in the Twenty-First Century" this particular aspect of the man who also had a unique impact on naval history. And just look what Leif Brisfjord in such a short time has done with the Newsletter and JESNY website!

I would like to make an extra mention of two very fine recently published books about John Ericsson. In Swedish, Björn Hallerdt's "Propellerns Pionjär och Monitors Mästare" and Olav Thulesius highly acclaimed "The Man who made the Monitor", in English. These are must haves for the Ericsson enthusiast.

Enjoy reading the articles in this issue, which tell the tale of the continuing impact that John Ericsson has on our world. Among other things Fall 2007 held a **Roundtable** discussion in New York and viewing of JE artifacts at the Tekniska Museet in Stockholm. The inspiration continues.

Alexandra Svernlöv
Newsletter Editor

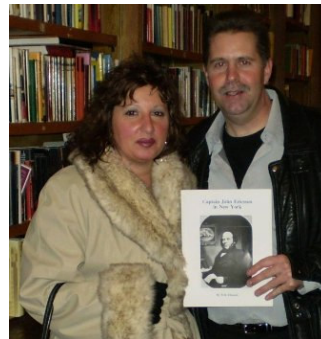
John Ericsson Literature Roundtable

The final John Ericsson Memorial Event of the year 2007, the annual November celebration of his arrival in the USA, was a **Roundtable** discussion of **John Ericsson Literature**. It was held at the Church of Sweden on Friday, November 30.

Leif Brisfjord organized the program and John Marks, JESNY Treasurer, was Moderator. Inez L. Brisfjord, JESNY Special Projects, prepared a Lit-

erature Overview and arranged a display of a selection of books, including juvenile literature, in current circulation from three public libraries. The display reflected aspects of Ericsson's work that retain enduring interest for general recreational reading and his place in the pantheon of childhood heroes. Rare books were available on site but not included in the display: "Contribution to the Centennial Exhibition" by John Ericsson and the only biography authorized by John Ericsson himself, "The Life of John Ericsson", two vols. by William Conant Church.

Author David F. White – a former New York Times reporter, author of two books and many articles about Ericsson, the sea, and maritime matters, discussed his work and displayed a recent publication, his book "BITTER OCEAN, The Battle of the Atlantic, 1939-1945". David is a new member of JESNY.



Carol Barbara and Craig Eliasson

Craig Eliasson attended the **Roundtable**. A member, he is a grandson of Eric Eliasson, author of "Captain John Ericsson in New York", a book published by JESNY in 1988. Craig recalled accompanying his grandfather on trips around New York City to take the photographs that illustrate the text. Author Eric Eliasson was a long time member of JESNY. He was born in Varberg, Halland, Sweden and came to USA around 1928. He was employed by Con Edison Co. and lived in the Bronx until age 90. He then moved to Blauvelt, Rockland County, NY where he resided until his demise more than ten years later.

A recent publication by a third member of JESNY was included in the **Roundtable**, "The Man Who Made the Monitor, A biography of John Ericsson, Naval Engineer" by Olav Thulesius.



Participants at the Roundtable discussion

Among participants in the **Roundtable** were: Spanton C. Ashdown, Inez L. Brisfjord, Carol Barbara, Craig Eliasson, Jon Marks, Dolores Swanson, Janice L. Weinmann, George Weinmann and David F. White. With Jon Marks facilitating, and all present participating, the discussion was informative and animated yet amicable. Refreshments, continuously available, were served during the **Roundtable** discussion. The ready acceptance of a suggestion that additional discussion/lecture programs be offered by JESNY reflects the participants' satisfaction with the event.

Ericsson Family Descendants

Among the juvenile books on display on November 30, during the Literature **Roundtable**, was "Thank You Very Much, Captain John Ericsson" by Connie Nordhielm Wooldridge. In it she alluded to "three Ericsson family descendants". Because they are not mentioned in the documents available to JESNY, Leif Brisfjord contacted the author and requested family tree or other information. She replied promptly that according to family documents the persons mentioned are descendants of Nils, the elder brother of John Ericsson. Further, she suggested that he contact her father, Ben Nordhielm for more specific information on the connection. Ben Nordhielm replied, confirmed that he has been conducting genealogical research on their family, but did not complete it during a recent trip to Sweden. He will send as much family tree information as is possible from the data he has collected to date.

John Ericsson in the Twenty-first Century

*Leif G. Brisfjord
President, JESNY*

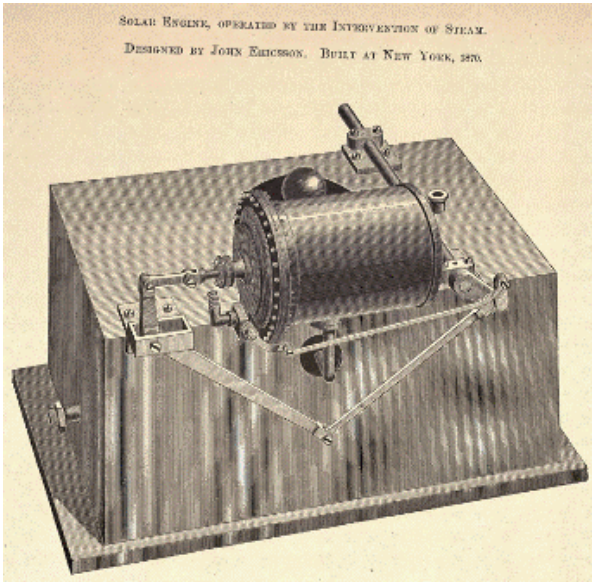
From time to time an inventor comes along who transforms an entire industry, forever changing its principal product and stimulating the development of technology. Such a man was Captain John Ericsson. His inventions, notably incorporated in the Civil War battleship USS Monitor, marked a turning point in shipbuilding and transformed the maritime industry. As engineer and inventor of the 19th century, his research and innovations in propeller design, hot air engines and solar energy are relevant to 21st century issues for example, energy resources and solar power.

The John Ericsson Society, New York offers members the privilege of participating in the use of 21st Century technology and methods to gather and provide access to evidence of the achievements of Captain John Ericsson, thus preserving for future generations an accurate record of his historic contributions and promoting the advancement of engineering science.

On November 23, 2006, as the Memorial Celebration of John Ericsson's arrival in the US, the JESNY Website and the Virtual Library were launched, and a publicity brochure was prepared to announce the Centennial Year of the Society. In these, the statement of mission and purpose of the Society was taken from official documents, as required. In addition I wrote the statements above to highlight the continuing relevance of Captain John Ericsson's work to current worldwide issues.

Ericsson devoted the last thirty years of his life to research on solar energy. For this purpose he constructed an observatory on the roof of his house. He wrote treatises on the subject and invented solar engines. Lund University, Sweden, founded 1668, bestowed an honorary doctorate upon him during its bicentennial celebration in 1868 and published his treatise on the use of solar heat as a mechanical motor power.

On May, 3, 2007 **sun21**, the first ship in history to cross the Atlantic Ocean under solar power alone, arrived in New York City at North Cove Marina. Because of the relevance of Ericsson's 19th work to this 21st century accomplishment JESNY was invited to participate in the welcome ceremonies and various celebrations of the historical event.



Solar Engine Designed by John Ericsson, Built in New York, 1870

The records and relics of Ericsson's achievements are scattered – during the year we received evidence of some as far away as Australia. Thanks to 21st century information and communication technology JESNY gathers and disseminates the Ericsson record far beyond the English/Swedish speaking world. The Website is now available in twelve languages.

Users of JESNY information resources are not passive – queries arrive from students preparing doctoral dissertation proposals; new docents preparing for duty at the Mariner's Museum; members of a hot air engine group in the southwest of USA; a hiker, concerning the John Ericsson, a demanding trail in the Sierra Nevada; authors; ship's Captain; readers with Civil War/model ship and trains/history interests..... And they share information – a college librarian/professor of Classical Greek in Tennessee contributed an eleven page bibliography of books about the Monitor, etc...

As with John Ericsson history, so the records and relics of the first hundred years of JESNY are scattered. An urgent task, in 2008 at the threshold of its second century, is to gather and organize the records of the Society. Strengthening the infrastructure of the Society will promote the reaching of its objectives: "To perpetuate and honor the memory of Captain John Ericsson, advance the profession of engineering and work for cooperation between the members of his profession in all countries with special recognition of those branches of engineering wherein Captain John Ericsson's principal achievements were attained....."

JESNY at Tekniska Museet, Stockholm

Members of JESNY who were in Stockholm met on December 7, 2007 at Swedish National Museum of Science and Technology (Tekniska Museet) to visit the John Ericsson collection and attend the opening of the exhibition "Man Machine 2": Alexandra Svernlöv (Newsletter Editor), Erik Wrangel (Liaison), Inez Brisfjord (Special Projects), Leif Brisfjord (President), Lars Paulsson (John Ericssonsällskapet and Tekniska Museet). The Museum published a book for the Ericsson Bicentennial in 2003 "Propellerns pionjär och Monitors mästare" (in Swedish) by Björn Hallert, copiously illustrated with technical drawings and photographs.

Following the exhibition opening festivities, Inez and Leif Brisfjord visited the area devoted to communications technology. There is an amateur radio station ("ham shack") operating in the area. Its director, Hans Löf, expert in telecommunication devices and applications, teacher of Morse Code, provided so much information and insight that they returned by appointment a week later with questions and a camera. The conversation centered on the mid 19th century situation – Ericsson's lifetime, Civil War and aftermath, continuing industrial revolution. A report on this meeting is in preparation for the JESNY Website.

[Note: Telegraph was used during the Civil War. Morse Code, created for the Morse and Vail telegraph which went in operation **1844**, is an early form of digital code since it was designed for using only two states – "on" and "off" - in the transmission of electrical pulses along a telegraph wire. And telegraph operators soon developed "text-messages", that is, "short-cut" expressions and conventions to speed information transfer.]



Hans Löf Sending Morse Code

Thank you, Bill



Bill Sewing

William T. Sewing of Charlotte, NC, a JESNY member of long standing, has presented a gift to the Society, a framed photograph of the USS Baltimore. Bill obtained the photograph from the Monitor Center of the Mariner's Museum, Newport News, VA.

The USS Baltimore was the battleship that bore the earthly remains of Captain John Ericsson from the United States to Sweden, land of his birth. With solemnity and appropriate ceremony the voyage of the Baltimore began Saturday August 23, 1890 and ended "with a transfer of her sacred charge to the custody of the Swedish Government on Sunday September 14, 1890".

Important Memorial Events

- **March 9th, Monitor Day** - Annual Dinner.
- **July 31st, John Ericsson's Birthday** - Celebration at the John Ericsson Statue in Battery Park, New York.
- **November 23rd, John Ericsson's arrival in the US** - Celebration.

Annual Meeting: John Ericsson Society, New York

Church of Sweden
5 East 48th Street
New York, NY 10017

Friday, February 1, 2008

5:00PM Executive Committee Meeting
6:00PM Annual Membership Meeting

Membership Dues

Payment for annual membership is due January 31st each year. Kindly send payment (\$20/year or \$200/one-time life membership).

Make your check out to "John Ericsson Society" and mail to **John Ericsson Society Treasurer:**

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Comments and suggestions for the next Newsletter are welcome.

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