

Oneupsmanship: Who's on first?

The chronicler of Lake Wobegone, Garrison Keillor, has lent his name to the Leif Ericson Society's efforts to reign on the Columbus Day parade in 1992. Ivar Christensen, president and spokesnorseman for the Media-based society, reports that Keillor "graciously accepted the general chairmanship" of the Longship Committee that is seeking funds to replace the ceremonial vikingship *Ravnen* (above), which is no longer seaworthy — or even Schuylkill-worthy, for that matter — following a collision with a Buick in 1988.

Before the accident, which took place when the *Ravnen* was being pulled on its trailer to take part in ceremonies honoring the visit by the King of Sweden to Philadelphia, the ship was a frequent voyager on the Schuylkill during Leif Ericson Day festivities. The society wants to raise funds to build a new Viking longboat in time for the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World.

"As you know, Leif arrived in America in 1003," said Keillor in a solicitation letter. "He didn't have time to wait around for Columbus, who arrived in the Caribbean 489 years later, but I'm sure Leif would have wished Columbus a good voyage and welcomed him to these shores, and so do we."

The Leif Ericson Society's idea of wishing Columbus well is more like rubbing it in. They want to have a viking ship in New York harbor to greet the sailing ships recreating Columbus' voyage in 1992. Presumably the Norsemen on board will have Norwegian banners greeting the the Columbus voyagers with messages like: "Better Late than Never!" and "Whatsamatter? Get Lost?"

By CLARK DeLEON

