



# Birka Banner

Birka Lodge, Vasa Order of America

May/June, 2017

## Message from the Chair

Greetings to all! The April 28<sup>th</sup> Installation of Officers was well attended with 25 members and guests. The following dignitaries attended: District Deputy Dawn Briggs, PDM/PGLD, who conducted the Installation ceremonies along with her installing team Ken Briggs, Past District Executive Board Member. Assisting with the installation was Greg Blomgren, District Outer Guard. Also attending from the District Lodge were: Linda Boylan, Vice District Master; Lynne Martin, District Treasurer; Ann-Marie Breuer, District Chaplain; Michael Bagnulo, District Executive Board Member; Eric Blomgren, District Inner Guard and Greg Blomgren, District Outer Guard.

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the April Installation, especially with food and setting up the hall, and all who helped in the kitchen. Delicious refreshments were served and enjoyed by all. We certainly have some great cooks at Birka Lodge! We received rave comments from our guests on the wonderful food tables of sandwiches, desserts, etc. Thank you, thank you to all! Thank you also to Gus and Roz Blomgren for donating the Raffle basket.

Also, thank you to the March Refreshment Committee for the delicious food we enjoyed at that meeting. Thank you, too, to the speaker, Bob Purzyki, who gave an interesting presentation about Hawaii.

At the **May 26 Meeting**, we will have a Memorial Service to remember our departed members who have died this past year. The Refreshment Committee will be chaired by Marlys Mahajan. The cultural program will be a *"Surprise"* Program. Please come!

The final meeting before the summer break will be **June 23**. There will be a Midsommar theme. The Refreshment Committee, co-chaired by Karin Caves and Matilda Halloran, will provide the traditional Strawberry Shortcake dessert. Cultural Leader, Ann-Marie Breuer will be presenting a cultural program. We will also be electing delegates to the District Convention to be held **September 15-17, 2017**, at the Best Western Hotel, Marlborough, MA. Please plan on attending.

The lodge is planning a summer outing in August. **Further details will be available at the May and June meetings.** Family and friends are invited. No date has been scheduled yet.

The next Activities Committee Meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 10, at 3:00 p.m.** A host for this meeting is still needed. All officers and members are invited to attend.

If you have been unable to attend a lodge meeting this year, it is not too late. We miss you. There are two lodge meetings remaining, in May and June, before the summer break. I hope to see you soon. Come and support your lodge and its officers. New program booklets for 2017-2018 will be available at these meetings. Thank you to Linda Boylan for providing them.

In closing, I would like to thank the lodge for re-electing me as your Chairman for the coming year. Thank you to all the officers who have taken an office for the coming year. I appreciate the help and support of all lodge members. Your presence is requested to give encouragement to your officers and make more secure the future of our Order.

Best wishes for a healthy and safe summer. Glad Midsommar! Happy Summer!

In truth and unity,

Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman

## Calendar of Events

### May

26 Lodge meeting, 7:30 p.m.

### June

23 Lodge meeting, Midsommar  
Strawberry Festival, 7:30 p.m.

### August

Summer outing! Details to come.

### September

10 Activities meeting—Host still needed, 3  
p.m.

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## REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

**May 26** Surprise Evening

Marlys Mahajan, chair  
Mike and Sue Bagnulo  
Linda Christianson  
Mary Anne Hawkes  
Judy Tanzer  
Ann DeLacey

**June 23** Midsommar Strawberry Festival

Karin Caves, co-chair  
Matilda Halloran, co-chair  
Eva Ghika

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... 'round the lodge

**Congratulations to all Birka Lodge officers**  
for the 2016–2017 season. Most of last year's  
officers are returning to the same positions  
this year. The only new officer is Marlys  
Mahajan, the new Assistant Recording  
Secretary. Thank you all for stepping up and  
keeping the Lodge running smoothly!

A Hearty Birka Birthday wishes go  
out to these members:



### May

1 William Guidara                      17 Linda Christianson  
13 Richard Lilja                         25 Al Reidlinger

### June

4 Ann Delacey                            17 Richard Johns  
8 Janet Dawe                             28 Ellen Greenberg  
12 Judy Tanzer

### July

2 Nancy Forsstrom-Gillespie  
3 Nancy Hayward                        15 John Caves  
8 Amy Hawkes                            16 Richard Sunman  
11 Audrey DiPillo                        24 Bill Ghen  
14 June Guidara                         28 Sandra DiPillo  
15 Nancy Olson

### August

11 Denise Esperson                      24 Lara Collins  
17 Matilda Halloran                      26 Ambia O. Smith  
17 Gordon Hayward                      26 Milton Leitner  
20 Janet Muller

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**Two pleasant surprises** awaited us at the  
April meeting. Members Gerry Tobiason of  
Ipswich and Nancy Forsstrom-Gillespie of  
Helena, Montana, were able to join us after a  
long absence. We hope they enjoyed the  
evening and can join us again soon!

**Summer Outing** No final decisions have been made yet concerning our summer outing. Two suggestions under consideration are a luncheon cruise on the *Beauport* out of Gloucester or a shuttle boat into Boston's North End. Come to the May meeting to vote your choice or propose a new venue!

**Dues** If you have not yet paid your 2016–2017 dues of \$25, please do so quickly. Mail a check, payable to Birka Lodge 732, to Linda Boylan, 12 Upton Lane, Boxfore, MA 01921.

**Sick Benefit Fund** If you have been a paid Vasa member for five years or more, you can receive assistance with medical expenses from the Grand Lodge. Each member is entitled to receive up to \$3,000. Please contact Recording Secretary Judy Tanzer for an application.

**Change of Address** Please notify Recording Secretary, Judy Tanzer, of any address changes, either by writing her at 3 Anthony Road, Hamilton, MA 01982, or by phoning her at 978-468-7407. Thank you.

**Website** Remember to check Birka Lodge's website for the latest postings about our lodge. A big Birka thanks to Richard Lilja for maintaining this site for us.

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## Next Year's Officers Installed

Several District officers joined us for the installation of our Lodge offices at our April meeting. District Deputy Dawn Briggs, PDM/PGLD and Ken Briggs, Past District Executive Board Member presided over the installation of next year's officers. They were accompanied by Lynne Martin, District Treasurer. Thank you Richard Lilja for recording the event with the following photos.



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On the web at [www.birka732.com](http://www.birka732.com)

Linda Christianson, Chairperson

Marlys Mahajan, Editor

Richard Lilja, Webmaster

# More Swedes die alone and with no money

**TT/The Local**  
news@thelocal.se  
20 May 2017  
11:35 CEST+02:00



File photo: Gorm Kallestad/NTB scanpix/TT

## **A growing number of Swedes die lacking both money and relatives, meaning their funerals must be paid for by the local council.**

The social services in both Malmö and Stockholm say they are having to arrange an increasing number of funerals for people who die lacking both money and relatives, a development confirmed by the Swedish Association of Funeral Directors (Sveriges Begravningsbyråers Förbund, SBF) and the Fonus funeral directors.

"How we take care of our deceased over time shows an interesting societal development; through all times funerals have mirrored the well-being of society. We have a sense that the local councils are often the ones ordering the service, as there is no-one else willing to deal with it," SBF Director Ulf Lerneus told TT newswire.

The city of Malmö annually arranges between 25 and 30 funerals for deceased who either lack relatives entirely, or when the relatives are unwilling to arrange the funeral. "Many do not have relatives or close family, and someone has to ensure the person is buried. That means the local council has to step in," said Eva Holmström, family lawyer at the city of Malmö.

Malmö has also seen a slight increase in the number of applications for financial support to cover funeral fees, which may be provided when the estate of the deceased person does not contain enough funds to cover the costs of a funeral.

The number of applications in Malmö has gone up by approximately 25 per year in the past three years. Last year, the city of Malmö received 450 such applications. Another trend, noticed by the funeral directors, is that some local councils have begun ordering funerals without a ceremony.

"That means the body is transported directly from the morgue to the crematorium, to be buried in an urn in a memorial grove," said Ulf Lerneus.

Peter Göransson, head of marketing at the Fonus funeral directors, has also noticed this development.

"Funerals without a ceremony are on the rise, but a growing number of relatives are also choosing more lavish ceremonies when the estate of the deceased is paying.

From a customer's perspective, we are treated differently depending on what council we live in. There is a great variety in the subsidies paid by the local councils, in spite of clear recommendations from the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen). It is regrettable if a civil servant gets to decide how a funeral is to be carried out," Göransson told TT.

Between 90,000 and 95,000 people die every year in Sweden, approximately 10,000 of whose estates have no money left in their accounts after the funeral, the Swedish Tax Agency said.

# Recipe: How to make this very Swedish summer cocktail



**The Local**  
news@thelocal.se  
19 May 2017  
06:59 CEST+02:00

john duxburyswedish foodcocktailssummerswedish lifestyledrinks

A Swedish blackberry and elderflower cocktail. Photo: John Duxbury/Swedish Food

**This Blackberry and elderflower cocktail from Swedish food writer John Duxbury is a perfect compliment to the summer weather, as is the alcoholic version.**

A lovely cocktail based on two ingredients which are popular in Sweden, although St Germain liqueur is produced in France. The non-alcoholic version is a refreshing drink on a warm late summer's afternoon when blackberries are at their best.

## Summary

Makes: 1

Preparation: 2 Minutes

## Tips

- If you haven't got a muddler, use a fork to mash the blackberries and sugar together
- If the blackberries are large, halve them and remove the core
- The berry bits float in the non-alcoholic version but sink in the alcoholic version. So you may prefer to serve the alcoholic version without a straw as it can get clogged up with bits.
- For a non-alcoholic version simply replace gin and St Germain with elderflower syrup.

## Ingredients for the alcoholic version

2-6 blackberries, depending on size	½ tbsp. caster (superfine) sugar
25 ml (3/4 oz) Bombay Sapphire gin	15 ml (1/2 oz) St Germain liqueur
Ice cubes	Soda water
10 ml (1/3 oz) fresh lemon juice, approximately half a small lemon	

## Method

1. Put the blackberries in an old fashioned glass (whisky tumbler/on the rocks glass), add sugar and muddle until all the sugar is dissolved
2. Add lemon juice, gin and St Germain.
3. Top up with ice cubes and soda water. Stir thoroughly.
4. Garnish with berries or a slice of lime, as desired

Recipe courtesy of John Duxbury, founder and editor of [Swedish Food](#).

## Recipe: How to make Swedish cloudberry soufflé

**The Local**  
[news@thelocal.se](mailto:news@thelocal.se)  
28 April 2017  
06:59 CEST+02:00



Cloudberry soufflé. Photo: John Duxbury/Swedish Food

**Food writer John Duxbury shares his recipe for a very impressive dessert with Swedish delicacy cloudberreries.**

Soufflés are such wonderfully theatrical desserts that they are a splendid way of finishing any meal. Using cloudberreries makes it feel so Swedish and gives the soufflés an exquisite taste.

Cloudberreries (hjortron) only grow in the wild in northern Scandinavia and are a much sought-after delicacy. It is possible to buy cloudberry jam (usually sold as hjortronsylt), which is used in this recipe, outside of Sweden in specialist shops or online.

### Summary

Makes: 6 soufflés

Preparation: 15 minutes

Cooking: 15 minutes

### Ingredients

25g (1oz) unsalted (sweet) butter, plus extra for greasing

2 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar

2 tbsp plain (all-purpose) flour

240ml (1 cup) milk

2 egg yolks

3 egg whites

140g (1 cup) cloudberry jam (hjortronsylt)

1 tbsp Lakka (Finnish cloudberry liqueur), optional

Icing (confectioner's) sugar, for dusting

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 250C (475F, gas 9, fan 200C).
2. Generously grease the insides of six individual ramekins. Coat the insides with half the sugar. This helps the soufflés rise because it gives the mixture a textured surface to climb.
3. Place a teaspoon of cloudberry jam in the bottom of each ramekin.
4. Melt the butter in a pan, add the flour and cook over a low heat for 30 seconds, stirring to make a roux. Slowly add the milk and stir continuously to form a smooth sauce. Cook until the sauce boils and thickens.
5. Remove the sauce from the heat, leave to cool slightly, then stir in the egg yolks. Add the remaining cloudberry jam and cloudberry liqueur and set aside.
6. Whisk the egg whites to form firm peaks. Fold in the remaining sugar, then the cloudberry mixture.

7. Spoon the mixture into the ramekins, smoothing the tops if you like the soufflés to rise straight, but leaving it if you like a more rustic looking top.

8. Cook for 10-12 minutes, until well risen and golden on top, but still with a slight wobble. Dust lightly with icing (confectioner's) sugar and run with them to the table before they start to sink!

#### Note

Whilst cold soufflés look pretty ugly they really taste every bit as good as their hot cousins, possibly even better, so if you have any soufflés left over don't throw them away.

#### Tips

- You can prepare the soufflé mixture up to three hours ahead, up to stage five. Store the sauce and unwhisked egg whites in sealed containers in the fridge, but for best results bring back to room temperature before continuing.

- Make sure the oven is really hot before you put the soufflés in, as they need an instant blast of heat to push up the egg whites, before they have the chance to set.

Recipe courtesy of John Duxbury, founder and editor of [Swedish Food](#).

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## Irving Berlin's ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin  
Original Book by Hebert and Dorothy Fields  
As revised by Peter Stone

Saturday, May 20, 3pm & 7:30pm

Sunday, May 21, 2pm & 6:30pm

Thursday, May 25, 7:30pm

Saturday, May 27, 3pm & 7:30pm

Sunday, May 28, 2pm & 6:30pm

Monday, May 29, 3pm

Tickets \$18 in advance, \$25 at the door

[PURCHASE TICKETS HERE](#)

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Phone: 1.978.468.4818

