



Birka732.com

Birka Banner

Birka Lodge, Vasa Order of America

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2018

Message from the Chair

Greetings to all Birka members. As you know, Birka's biggest fund raising event of the year is soon here. The Lodge needs your help and support to make the Jul Fair as successful as it has always been. If you have not yet signed up to help at the Fair, the sign-up sheet will be available at the November 16th meeting or you can call me. We also need help setting up and decorating the Community House on **Friday evening, November 23, starting at 5 p.m.** The tables are always busy when the Fair first opens, and more help is appreciated.

We are also requesting contributions for the **Grabs Table**—new items with a value of **\$5.00 or more. Please wrap in holiday paper without a price, and labeled** as to whether it is intended for a boy or girl (with appropriate age range), man, or woman. Home baked goods are also requested for the **Bake Table** and should be priced beforehand, with the ingredients clearly listed to alert customers with food allergies.

If you have received a flyer, please copy, post, and distribute it to family, friends, and colleagues. Many of our Lodge members and table chairpersons have worked hard to prepare for the Fair. We have imported gift items, linens, jewelry, books, Dala horses, candles and candle holders from Sweden as well as imported foods for your Christmas and holiday table. **The Lucia procession will take place at 12:00 noon.** Please mark the date and come and support your Lodge. I look forward to seeing you there. It would be great if you have a folk costume or Scandinavian sweater to wear to the fair!

At the **September 28th** meeting, the Refreshment Committee, chaired by Janet Muller, provided delicious refreshments. Following the meeting, we had our annual Harvest Auction, which raised \$196 for the Lodge. Thank you to all who participated.

The **October 26th** Halloween Potluck Supper was well attended, and everyone enjoyed the delicious casseroles, salads, and desserts brought by the great cooks in the Lodge. Thank you to Janet Muller and her committee for coordinating and setting up the hall. No one went home hungry! Thank you to everyone. We had a wonderful group of costumed members. Thank you to all who participated. Prizes were awarded to members dressed in costumes. Thank you to Ann-Marie Breuer for providing the prizes. Also, thank you to our musician, Bob Landoni, for providing music.

The Activities Committee met on **October 14** at Judy Tanzer's home. Thank you, Judy. We discussed the Jul Fair and upcoming events. The next Activities Committee meeting will meet **February 17, 2019, at 2:30 p.m.** Marlys Mahajan will host us. **The Auditors will also meet to audit the Lodge's financial books.**

Your annual dues for 2018 of **\$25** per person are due in January. Lodge dues should be paid by the end of April. Make your check payable to **Birka Lodge No. 732**, and mail it to our Financial Secretary, Linda Boylan at 12 Upton Lane, Boxford, MA 01921. (Phone: 978-887-3917).

Early Birds who pay their 2019 dues of \$25 in December will be entered in a drawing to receive a **FREE MEMBERSHIP** for 2020. **PLEASE PAY DUES EARLY!** Thank you.

The **November 16 meeting** will be the last meeting of 2019. The cultural theme will be Scandinavian Craft Night directed by Ann-Marie Breuer. Thank you to her and to Andrea and Mike

Swanson and their committee, who will provide the refreshments for the meeting. Nomination and election of officers for the 2019 term will be held. Please contact Mike Bagnulo if you do not plan on remaining in your current office. The Lodge needs your participation.

The **Lucia Rehearsal** will be held on **Saturday, November 17, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** at the Community House. Please note the day and time changes. Lucia this year is Anna Carlson of Natick. New children are welcome. Please contact me if you are interested.

Also on **Sunday, November 18, at 12:30 p.m.** Marlys Mahajan will host the sixth annual Cookie Bake, baking for the Jul Fair. Please contact Marlys (978-468-4423) for more details.

The first event of 2019 is our annual **Children's Tree Plundering Party**, which will be **Sunday, January 6 at 3:00 p.m. at the Community House.** Music, storytelling, dancing around the Christmas tree, gifts, refreshments, and a visit from Tomten are planned. Details will be mailed out in early December. A sign-up sheet will be available at the November 16 meeting.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **November 16 meeting** as well as at the **Jul Fair on Saturday, November 24**, and at the **January 6 Tree Plundering Party.** Your presence is requested to support and encourage your Lodge and its officers.

Best wishes for a peaceful and joyful holiday season. God Jul och, Gott Nytt Ar!

In truth and unity,

Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman



Hearty Birka Birthday wishes to these members:

... in November

4 Linda Boylan	19 Sonja Prior
5 Joanne Emerson	24 Ron Holmgren
8 Andrea Holmgren	25 Jane Atherton

... in December

1 Bob Landoni	9 Kari DeLacey
3 Marilyn Seaberg	10 Richard Johnson
5 Gus Blomgren	11 Alison Landoni
9 Mary Anne Hawkes	17 Cynthia Olsen
9 Sharon Guidara	19 Andrea Swanson

REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

Scandinavian Craft Night

November 17

Co-Chairs;

Andrea & Mike Swanson

Karin Caves

Sharon & June Guidara

Sheila / Richard Sunman

Marcia Sunman

Sarah Williams

January 7

Marlys Mahajan, (Chair)

Gus, Eric, Greg Blomgren

Denise Esperson

Mary Anne Hawkes

Mike & Andrea Swanson

Kristen Seashore



... 'round the lodge

For college age and soon-to-be college age members The Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of America, gives out eight \$1,000 scholarships each year. The deadline for applications is **February 15, 2019**. Check the Vasa website for details about the application process.

Jul Fair Flyer Please post the enclosed flyer in a public place to help publicize our Jul Fair. Publicity is a key ingredient to sales!

Cookie Bake Our sixth annual Cookie Bake will be held at Marlys Mahajan's home on **November 18**. Join us any time between **12:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.** and you can mix, mold, decorate, bag, or label cookies for as much time as you want. Marlys will provide the basics – flour, butter, sugar, oven, mixer, etc. You can bring a favorite recipe or use one of ours. Just let Marlys know (978-468-4423) and we will put you to work!

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



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

Reminders . . .

Table Chairs and Workers: Please refrain from taking down your displays before the Fair ends at 2 p.m., no matter how much traffic we have. Last minute shoppers find it distracting if we are closing down the displays rather than serving our customers. Thank you.

- Dues that are paid before **December 31** are eligible to win **FREE DUES** for 2020. Pay your dues early and you could be the lucky winner!
- Remember to sign up with Linda Boylan if you wish to join other Jul Fair workers for dinner after the fair. The last day to let Linda (978-887-3917) know is **November 13th**.

Calendar of Events



November

- 16 Lodge meeting, Scandinavian Craft night, 7:30 p.m.
Please bring tissue paper and scissors!
- 17 Lucia Practice, 11:30 a.m.
- 18 Cookie Bake at Mahajan's, 12:30 p.m.
- 24 Setup for Jul Fair, 5 p.m.
- 25 Jul Fair, 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

December

- 25 God Jul! (Merry Christmas)

January

- 6 Tree Plundering, 3 p.m.
- 25 Lodge meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Jul Marknad

You can help by

- Lending a hand at set-up time, Friday, **November 27, at 5 p.m.**
- Contributing one to four \$5 gift grabs, labeled for men, women, boys, or girls
- Donating baked goods for the bake table
- Signing up to help at one of the tables on Saturday morning.

Thank you in advance!

Hexan Fun at the October Meeting

The October meeting was a howling success! The potluck dinner was sumptuous, and to celebrate the season, members came dressed in creative Halloween costumes. Anne-Marie Breuer had prizes for all the wonderful costumes. Thank you, Anne-Marie!

What is Caramella?

Every year the Lodge decorates its Christmas tree with Caramella. So what are they you ask? Caramella are candies, shaped like stubby little logs and wrapped in paper with the ends tied with ribbons. They were originally made with caramel, hence the origin of the name. However, today any suitably shaped candies are used.

At the **November 16** meeting, Ann-Marie Breuer will provide the makings for members to make Caramella for their own Christmas trees. She has asked that members bring scissors and tissue paper for completing the craft. She will provide the candies, glue and ribbons needed.

Birka Banner is a bi-monthly newsletter, published by Birka Lodge 732, Vasa Order of America, and on the web as www.birka732.com

Linda Christianson, Chairperson
Richard Lilja, Webmaster

Marlys Mahajan, Editor

Website Remember to check Birka Lodge's website. The web address is found below. The website is maintained by Richard Lilja. Thank you, Richard.

Sweden celebrates its favorite Italian Catholic saint on December 13th. Don't say these things to the Swedes on this beloved winter holiday.

1. It's too early in the morning (*det är för tidigt på morgonen*)

Here's what you do. You get up early in the morning on December 13th, [go to your school, workplace, local church](#), or what have you, and watch as a nominated girl or young woman dons a white dress, wears a wreath of candles on her head and sings Christmas songs. Don't complain about the fact that it's still pitch black outside (this is Sweden in winter). If you prefer to stay in your pajamas, switch on your TV to watch Swedish public broadcaster SVT showing the event.

If you're a Nobel winner, there's absolutely no escaping this peculiar Swedish tradition. Because December 13th is just a few days after the Nobel Prize gets handed out in Sweden, the Nobel laureates traditionally get woken up in their Stockholm hotel rooms by Lucia and her fellow singers.

2. Isn't she from Italy? (*är hon inte från Italien?*)

It's a bit surprising that one of the secular Swedes' favorite holidays is named after a saint. Even more surprising that she is, or was, Italian. Lucia (or Saint Lucy) was a Catholic girl martyred in Syracuse, Sicily, in 304 AD. It remains unclear quite how she worked her way into Swedish tradition, although December 13th was marked as the shortest day of the year under the Julian calendar way back in the 14th century. Anyway, best not get tied up in a history debate with your colleagues. Just smile along nicely.

3. Why is that man wearing a skirt? (*varför bär den där mannen en kjol?*)

Even in these days of gender equality, the girls have pretty much got Lucia wrapped up. But it is becoming increasingly common for schools, workplaces and charities organizing the traditional Lucia procession to pick a man to headline the act, albeit usually as a ploy. However, the break with tradition did [spark a media storm in southern Sweden in 2014](#) after a boy was picked to represent his school as Lucia. In 2016 a major retail chain was [forced to pull its advert](#) of a boy as Lucia after he received racist abuse.

4. What's a gnome doing next to a gingerbread man and a boy in a pointy hat? (*vad gör en tomte bredvid en pepparkaksgubbe och en pojke i spetsig hatt?*)

The modern Lucia procession includes several other popular characters. Children dress up as Swedish 'tomtar' (gnomes), [gingerbread men](#), and 'stjärngossar' ('star boys'), as well as Lucia and her maidens. They all have their own theme songs to which the Swedes know all the lyrics. The star boys are an excuse for men who did not fancy putting candles in their hair but would quite like a dress to live out their dream. They also wear long, white robes, but instead of a crown of candles they get a pointy hat.

5. I don't like saffron (*jag tycker inte om saffran*)

As the famous Swedish saying goes, a holiday is not a holiday without some bizarre Swedish food to accompany it (there's a possibility we just made that up). But be prepared to gorge on traditional saffron-flavored Swedish Lucia buns ([lussekatter](#)). Oh and don't forget to wash everything [down with some glögg](#).

6. I thought they had banned Lucia? (*jag trodde att de hade förbjudit Lucia?*)

Almost every year, at least one story of a [Swedish town scrapping Lucia goes viral](#) – this news cycle is almost as much of a December tradition as Lucia itself. One school was forced to backtrack in 2012 after it told pupils [not to dress up as brown gingerbread men](#), another popular Lucia character, for its procession. It [usually boils down simply to waning interest](#). Bah humbug we say to that!

SWEDISH YULE FAIR

(Traditional Jul Marknad)

Saturday, November 24th

9:00am-2:30pm



Hamilton/Wenham Community House
(Bay Road Route 1-A)

FREE ADMISSION

Lucia (Bride of Light) 12:00 noon

Scandinavian & American HOLIDAY MUSIC (all day)

LUNCH AT NOON: Assorted, Open-Face Sandwiches

Coffee & Coffee Bread, Glögg & Pepparkakor (all day)

Gifts, Handcrafts, Imported Linens, Ornaments, Jewelry

Cards, Wrapping Paper, Candles, Candle Holders & Rings

Dala Horses, Straw Goats, Jul Tomtes (gnomes) etc

VALKOMMEN!

BIRKA LODGE NO. 732 OF HAMILTON, MASSACHUSETTS

VASA ORDER OF AMERICA

Non-Profit Fraternal Benefit Association

WWW.Birka732.com





284
STAGE
@ THE COMMUNITY HOUSE
PRESENTS

**Sunday
November 18
2:00 p.m.**

**A musical revue & tea party
featuring your favorite
princesses and more!**

**Featuring some of your
favorite princesses and the
twinkling trickster Tinkerbell!**

Have your photo taken with
your favorite characters and get
their autographs. Light refreshments
to be served: tea, punch, cookies
and other royal delights.



\$15 per Person

Photos and autographs with
the princes and princesses are an
additional \$5 at the event.

A special event to benefit
Stage284 Theater!

Bring your autograph book!

Space is Limited. Reservations ONLY

www.stage284.org
284 Bay Road, S. Hamilton, MA • 978.468.4818



**The Best
Christmas Pageant
Ever: The Musical**

December 14-22

The Herdmans are the worst kids in the history of the world--so when they crash Sunday school and demand parts in the Christmas pageant, the whole town panics! Can a first-time director and the Reverend help their community see the Christmas story and the Herdman kids through new eyes? A buoyant musical adaptation of the funny and touching holiday classic.

TICKETS

