

BIRKA BANNER

Bi-Monthly Newsletter, Birka Lodge #732, Vasa Order of America
www.geocities.com/birka732

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2009

Chairman's Message

Greetings and Happy New Year 2009 to all Birka Members! I hope that everyone had an enjoyable Christmas holiday and new year celebrations with family and friends.

Now that the holidays are over it is time to begin our lodge meetings/activities for 2009. This year Birka Lodge will be celebrating our 25th Anniversary. Plans are underway for a celebratory event on Saturday, May 2, 2009. Please mark the date on your calendars. More details to follow.

Our first lodge meeting will be **Friday, January 23rd at 7:30 p.m., Bohusland Theme**. Our Cultural Leader, Ann-Marie Breuer, will be presenting a program on this wonderful province. Please plan on attending. Refreshments will be provided by the Kitchen Committee, chaired by Linda Boylan. There will also be a **"mini" after Christmas Fair sale** with candles, linens, napkins and other paper goods, imported Swedish Christmas ornaments and a small amount of food from our Deli Table. This is a great opportunity to purchase some items if you were not able to be at the fair or were too busy working at the fair to shop.

The **February 27th meeting will have a Scandinavian Costume Theme** and plans are being formulated for the evening's program. The Kitchen Committee, chaired by Judy Tanzer will be serving delicious refreshments following the meeting. Please come to enjoy Vasa fellowship and refreshments.

At the **November 21st** meeting, Nomination and Election of Officers was held. A motion was made to accept the slate of officers presented. All nominated officers agreed and the nominations were closed. I would like to thank the officers for being willing to serve in your current office and support the lodge.

Our **Christmas Fair on November 29th** was very successful. My thanks and appreciation is extended to all who participated and helped in any way both that day and Friday night during the set up. These events cannot happen without the **help and cooperation** of everyone. I certainly could not do this alone! The Christmas Fair is our largest fund raising event of the year and I'm so very grateful to all of you for coming and being part of the success of this event. Many, many thanks to all. It is an event that is a service to the community and many non-Scandinavians look forward to the fair every year. Our Treasurer, Mike Swanson, will have a more detailed report of the profits at the January meeting. The Lucia procession again this year was a great group of children. They all did a wonderful job and looked adorable as they sang and processed to the stage. Our Lucia was Rayna Palm from Connecticut, a relative of Birka Lodge member, Janet Muller. Both Rayna's sister, Alison and brother, Loni have previously participated in our Lucia procession. Thank you to our soloist, Pamela Morris for her leadership and singing during the Lucia procession. I would also like to thank musicians, Bob Landoni and Mark French, for playing during the fair as well as Richard Johnson and Ernie Geiser. And a special thank you to Carolyn Johnson, who played the piano for our Lucia procession and provided holiday music with the other musicians throughout the day.

On Sunday afternoon, **January 4th** our annual **Tree Plundering Party** was held. There were 19 children and 28 adults who attended. Thank you to everyone who brought food, children and themselves! It was a great time and the children as well as the adults had a great time. Thank you to Mike and Sue Bagnulo for setting up the hall along with Linnea Christianson, Judy Tanzer, Carol Landoni, Ann-Marie Breuer, Mike Swanson, Linda Boylan and other helpers who I may have forgotten for organizing the kitchen and the food and cleaning up afterwards; to Linda Boylan for taking the reservations; to Bob Landoni for providing the music for the dancing; to Ann-Marie Breuer for teaching the game dances and reading two wonderful stories for the children; to Mike Bagnulo (Tomten). Thanks to all!

Please note: The next Activities Committee meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, February 1st at 3:00 p.m. at the home of Ann-Marie Breuer in Hamilton**. Snow date will be Sunday, February 8th. The Auditors will also be meeting on February 1st at 3:00 p.m. with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary to audit the financial books of the lodge. The activities for the spring will be planned. Please contact me if you plan on attending.

Reminder: Please notify the Recording Secretary, Mrs. Judy Tanzer, 3 Anthony Road, So. Hamilton, MA 01982, telephone no. 978-468-7407, of any address changes. Thank you.

Annual dues of \$20 for 2009 is now due. Please mail your dues to: Financial Secretary, Linda Boylan, 12 Upton Lane, Boxford, MA 01921, payable to: Birka Lodge No. 732. **Please consider this your dues notice for 2009. Dues are due in January.**

Before closing I would like to thank the members of the November Refreshment Committee, chaired by Andrea and Mike Swanson, for the delicious refreshments that we all enjoyed that evening.

Please note: Construction has begun on the front portico of the Community House. Approach the front, right-hand side entrance and walk up the wooden, temporary access ramp. Completion of the renovation is expected sometime in the spring.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **January 23rd and February 27th** meetings. Please mark the dates on your new 2009 calendars! Your presence is requested to give encouragement to your officers and make more secure the future of our Order.

In truth and unity, Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman

Happy Birthday!

JANUARY

5	Melissa Starrak	22	Gerard Tobiason
10	Abigail St Hilaire	25	Ann-Marie Breuer
14	Janet Bloom	31	Carol Whynott
17	Barbara Kanerva		

FEBRUARY

1	Joan Sullivan	11	Inga-Lill Olsson
2	John Anderson, Jr.	12	Elizabeth Sandberg
6	Robert Blomgren	15	Eva Ghika
11	Gunvor Breuer	22	Karl Seaburg

REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

January 23 - Kaffe med dopp, "Bohusland Theme"

Linda Boylan, Chair
Helene Blomqvist
Edith & Bob Sanborn
Mike & Andrea Swanson
Denise Esperson
Charles & Mary Anne Hawkes

February 27 - "Scandinavian Fashion Parade"

Judy Tanzer, Chair
Marilyn & Karl Seaburg
Lara Collins
Sonja Pryor
Audrey DiPillo
Matilda Halloran
Milton Leitner
Joan Sullivan

Schedule of Upcoming Events

January 23 - 7:30 p.m. Meeting - "Bohusland Theme"

February 1st-3:00 pm Activities/Auditor's Cte. Mtg.
Anne-Marie Breuer Home (Snow date Sun. Feb. 8th)

February 27 - 7:30 p.m. Meeting - 'Scandinavian Fashion Parade'

May 2nd - 25th Anniversary Party - Danvers YC

....'round the lodge....

Sonja "Sunny" Dahlgren Pryor, conductor of "Chorus North Shore" put on its annual holiday concert, "A Celebration of Christmas" on December 12th and 13th. This was her 47th year as conductor. According to Sonja, more people sing in choral groups than those who play sports. That statistic, provided by Choral America, stands in contrast to the cuts in arts funding in schools across the country. Locally, Chorus North Shore attempts to fill that gap with its Honors Youth Choir, made up of children from around the North Shore, ranging in age from 10-16. Members must audition to join the 32 member choir. They are trying to foster the choral arts because so many schools have dropped it. The youth choir is made up of singers from all backgrounds. Sonja said they wanted to be inclusive and take kids from any neighborhood, rich or poor who have a desire to sing. Very nice project, Sonja.

Please send a card to Ann-Marie Breuer's Mom, Gunvor, who is recuperating from surgery and is now living at the Caldwell Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Ipswich.

Another great children's Julgransplundering (Tree Plundering) was held on Sunday afternoon, January 4th and it turned out to be another fun day for 19 children and 28 adults alike. Join us next year.

After 12 years, Eva Ghika, has retired from making her Jul Fair open-faced sandwiches that she had become famous for. Yes, the sandwiches will still be coming out of the kitchen, but under new management. Thanks, Eva.

Here's your chance to show off your cooking and baking skills. Our WebMaster, Rich Lilja, has just established a new "Recipe Favorites" section within the Birka #732 website and is looking for your favorite recipes. I have just submitted my Mom's recipe for Pepparkaka cookies and they are delicious. Everyone must have some family favorites.

Our Jul Fair gets better and better each year. I think most people enjoy having the fair at the Community Center. Thanks to Karl and his crew, we had an ample amount of coffee bread this year. In all honesty, do you think our good bakers can compete with Crown Bakery coffee bread recipes? Does anyone

SANTA LUCIA 2008



RAYNA PALM

Rayna Palm, age 11, daughter of Laurie Lundgren and Wilson Chow of Woodstock, CT became Santa Lucia during the annual Jul Fest held at the lodge on November 29th. Her grandparents are Jean and Dick Lundgren of Boxford. Her aunt, Janet Muller of Danvers, has been a longtime Birka Lodge member.

Rayna's sister, Alison was Lucia in 2001 and her brother, Lani Palm, was a Star Boy for several years. She has been a member of the children's group performing the Lucia Pageant since she was 3 1/2. Rayna is home-schooled and loves to cook. She has many pets, including 70 chickens, 3 goats, 2 cats and a dog.

The festival of Santa Lucia begins before dawn on the 13th of December, which under the old Julian calendar (used in Sweden before 1753) was Christmas Day and the longest night of the year. Throughout Sweden the eldest daughter in each household comes to her sleeping parents dressed in a long white gown tied with a red sash and wearing a crown of lingonberry leaves in which are set seven lighted candles. She carries a tray of steaming hot coffee and Lussekattor. The procession includes her sisters and brothers, also dressed in white, holding lighted candles and singing of the light and joy of Christmas. The sisters of the Lucia Bride wear a wreath of tinsel in their hair and a piece tied around their waist, while the boys have tall pointed caps sprinkled with stars. Awakened by the lights and singing, the parents rise and eat.

25TH ANNIVERSARY BIRKA LODGE #732 1984 - 2009

On May 2nd we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the founding of Birka Lodge at the Danversport Yacht Club. In 1983 there was no Birka Lodge, only a small group of performers known as the "Scandinavian Dancers of Hamilton", under the direction of the late Hakan Olsson and his wife Inga-Lill. Spiran Lodge in Rockport was a distance for most members and it was decided to have our meeting place closer. Birka Lodge #732 was founded in 1984 and currently has approximately 110 members primarily from Boston's North Shore area, New Hampshire and Maine. Most members are of Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Finnish ancestry. Sharing our Scandinavian culture and heritage binds us with strong fraternal ties. Through its meetings, at the Community Center in Hamilton, cultural events, holiday celebrations, bi-monthly newsletter and our web site, members can keep their Scandinavian heritage alive and learn about their roots.

When we sought to be instituted as a local lodge in District 2, we were faced with the task of selecting an appropriate name. We needed a name that would serve both the lodge as a whole and the dance group as well. Ultimately the name Birka was chosen. What could better reflect our viking origins? Birka (literally Björk Ö or Birch Island) was a Viking town that flourished between 800 and 1070 AD. It was located just to the north of Sweden's present capital of Stockholm on Lake Malaren.

Björk Ö today is a rural idyll. In the Viking Age it was the busy centre of Swedish trade with the rest of the world, the first town in Sweden. The ramparts protecting the town, and the fort, and extensive cemeteries are still visible in the landscape but the remains of Birka's wooden houses, alleys and jetties are hidden in the soil.



The island can be visited today. There are many tours lectures, an excellent museum. Ed and Lois Johnson visited the island recently and found it fascinating.

JUL FAIR 2008



BIRKA BANNER

Birka Lodge #732
Vasa Order of America

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FIRST CLASS

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