

# BIRKA BANNER

Bi-Monthly Newsletter, Birka Lodge #732, Vasa Order of America  
[www.birka732.com](http://www.birka732.com)

**JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010**

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## Chairman's Message

Greetings and Happy New Year 2010 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 2010.

Our first lodge meeting will be **Friday, January 22nd at 7:30 p.m.**. A video of Spitsbergen will be shown by Ed Johnson. Please plan on attending. Refreshments will be provided by the Kitchen Committee, chaired by Judy Tanzer. 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.

Sadly, at the January meeting will be draping the charter in memory of charter member, Gunvor Breuer, who died in late November following a lengthy illness. Gunvor served as Cultural Leader for many years and was very instrumental along with her daughter, Ann-Marie, Inga-Lill and Hakan Olsson and Thelma Steen in instituting Birka Lodge. Gunvor served the lodge in many capacities especially at our Jul Fairs and many of our events. Long may her memory live among us.

The **February 26th meeting will have an Icelandic Theme** and plans are being formulated for the evening's program. The Kitchen Committee, chaired by Linda Boylan will be serving delicious refreshments following the meeting. Please come to enjoy Vasa fellowship and refreshments.

At the **November 20th** 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 28th** 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. The children did a wonderful job and looked adorable as they sang and processed to the stage. Our Lucia was, Anna Onufry from Boxford. Anna has been participating in the Lucia procession since 2001. Her brother Eric was a star boy. Thank you to our, soloist, Pamela Morris for her leadership and singing during the Lucia procession and also to our new pianist, Helen Van Denhausen of Ipswich. I would also like to thank musicians, Warren Johnson, Bob Landoni, Mark French, Dan Murphy, Richard Johnson and Ernie Geiser for providing festive holiday music during the fair.

On Sunday afternoon, **January 10th** our annual **Tree Plundering Party** was held. 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 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 wonderful stories for the children; to Mike Bagnulo (Tomten). Thank you to all!

**Please note:** The next Activities Committee meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, February 14th at 2:30 p.m. at the home of Lois and Ed Johnson in Beverly.** The **Auditors** will also be meeting on **February 14th** at 2:30 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 2010 is now due.** Please mail your dues to: Financial Secretary, Linda Boylan, 12 Upton Lane, Boxford, MA 01921, payable to: Birka Lodge No. 732. **Reminder: Please consider this your dues notice for 2010. 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.

My mother, Linnea, is still recovering from recent hospitalizations over the holidays and will be continuing her recuperation at a local rehab. She is very grateful for all the cards she has received from her Birka friends. Thank you to all who have called and sent get well wishes.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **January 22nd and February 26th** meetings. Please mark the dates on your new 2010 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 Butt	25 Ann-Marie Breuer
14 Janet Bloom	31 Carol Whyntott
17 Barbara Kanerva	

## FEBRUARY

1 Joan Sullivan	12 Elizabeth Sandberg
2 John Anderson, Jr.	14 Eva Ghika
6 Robert Blomgren	19 Thommy Ilmrud
11 Inga-Lill Olsson	22 Karl Seaburg

## REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

### *January 22 - Meeting - Spitsbergen Video*

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

### *February 26 - Meeting - Iceland Theme*

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

## Schedule of Upcoming Events

January 22 - 7:30 p.m. Meeting - Spitsbergen Video  
Ed Johnson  
February 14- 2:30 p.m. Activities/Auditor's Cte. Mtg.  
Ed & Lois Johnson Home  
February 26 - 7:30 p.m. Meeting - Iceland Theme

## "BANNER" by mail or E-mail?

If you haven't yet, check [www.birka732.com](http://www.birka732.com) and download and print a recent issue of the Banner. A big advantage is that the photos are in color. You can arrange to have each issue sent to your web address instead of regular mail. Let us know.

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

Everyone, children and parents alike, enjoyed our annual Julgransplundering (Christmas Tree Plundering) on January 10th. This has become such a great tradition for us with the attendance growing larger by the year.

Karin Caves is home recuperating after her recent surgery at Beverly Hospital. She, unhappily, missed her first Jul Fair.

Barbara Lewis of Newburyport passed away in October after a 9 year battle with cancer. Our deepest regards to the family.

Ed is busy preparing his presentation for the Jan. 22 meeting. He is planning to bring in a digital projector and 60-inch screen to better enjoy the icy scenery from our trip to Spitsbergen aboard a Norwegian icebreaker.

## SANTA LUCIA 2009



### ANNA ONUFRY

Anna, age 11, daughter of Asa and Mark Onufry, of Boxford, became Santa Lucia during the annual Jul Fest held at the lodge on November 28th. She has been a member of the children's group performing the Lucia Pageant since she was 2 1/2. Her brother, Erik, was a Star Boy for many years.

Anna is in the 6th grade, plays soccer and really enjoys science. She has two cats. She took ballet, tap and jazz for many years. She has been a downhill skier in Vermont since 4th grade, after cross country skiing since she was a child.



## GUNVOR BREUER



Gunvor Elizabeth (Anderson) Breuer of Hamilton, Massachusetts died at the Caldwell Nursing Home in Ipswich on November 29, 2009 after a lengthy illness.

Gunvor is survived by her daughter, Ann-Marie Breuer of Hamilton, three nephews and a niece. Born in 1920 of Swedish-born parents, she graduated from Lynn English High School in 1939 and Burdette College two years later. She studied voice at the Boston Conservatory of Music and was complimented by Arthur Fiedler for her clear and fine contralto voice. She worked as office manager for her father's pattern-making company for many years.

Gunvor joined Spiran Lodge, VOA, in 1977 and was actively involved with the Varglad Entertainment group founded by Hakan and Inga-Lill Olsson. She was District Cultural Leader for District No. 2 VOA and in the early 1980's one of the founders and charter members of Birka Lodge No. 732, in Hamilton, where she was the announcer for the Scandinavian dancers.

She travelled to Sweden often and was fluent in the Swedish language. She loved music, poetry and reading. Gunvor was a member of the First Lutheran Church in Lynn.

A memorial service will be held at the First Lutheran Church, Wyoma Square in Lynn on Saturday, February 6th at 11:00 a.m. Contributions can be made to a favorite charity or the First Lutheran Church.

## SVALBARD - SPITSBERGEN

Svalbard, is a group of islands located in the Arctic Ocean, about 600 miles from the North Pole. Most of the human presence is concentrated in Spitsbergen, the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. Two thirds of the archipelago is permanently covered by ice, snow and glaciers and practically no vegetation. However, Svalbard is a vast land rich in natural resources such as coal, copper, iron, zinc and phosphate and this is what attracts human activity to this remote territory. Svalbard was used as an international whaling station during the 17-18th centuries, as a base for Arctic expeditions in the 19th century, and is currently a busy mining outpost for Norwegian and Russian companies. Svalbard became a demilitarized Norwegian dependency in 1920 and is administered by a Governor named by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice. Spitsbergen covers an area equivalent to the size of Switzerland, and has a population of about 3,000 people from Norway, Russia and Ukraine who are distributed among three mining colonies of the island.

Yet, despite the inhospitable conditions, the main Norwegian settlement of Longyearbyen is a modern, dynamic community with excellent infrastructures provided by the state-owned corporation Svalbard Samfunnsdrift. The settlers in Longyearbyen count on services such as kindergartens, schools, university courses, hotels, hospital, bank, shops and cultural centers. Many Norwegian and internationally renowned artists have performed in Longyearbyen and the settlement organizes a famous annual jazz festival called Polar Jazz. The tourism sector has developed enormously since the final decades of the 20th century and is currently a cornerstone in the island's economy, bringing to Spitsbergen more than 50,000 visitors per year.

*Source: SweMail*

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Students should be reminded that the District Lodge Massachusetts #2 is currently accepting applications for scholarships for those who are furthering their education and encourage any members, who are actively pursuing educational goals, to request an application form.

Request for an application should be sent to Marlene Patient, Vice District Master, 337 River St., Leicester, MA. Tel.508-892-1829



# JUL FAIR 2009



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Birka Lodge #732  
Vasa Order of America

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## FIRST CLASS

