

# Birka Banner

Birka Lodge 732, Vasa Order of America

January/February, 2014

---

## Chairperson's Message

Greetings and Happy New Year 2014 to all Birka Members! I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas holiday and new year celebration with family and friends. Now that the holidays are over, it is time to begin our lodge activities for 2014.

Our first lodge meeting will be **Friday, January 24, at 7:30 p.m.** Mike Swanson will present a cultural program on the Vasa Ship. Come hear about the ship that shares the name of our Order. Mike's last presentation on the USS Constitution was very informative. The Kitchen Committee, chaired by Judy Tanzer, will provide the refreshments, plus food from our Deli Table will be for sale. The annual report to the District Lodge will also be presented.

Sadly, at the January meeting we will be draping the charter in memory of long time member, Edith Sandborn, who passed away on November 18, 2013.

The **February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting will feature a cultural program about Dalarna**, presented by Cultural Leader, Ann-Marie Breuer. The Kitchen Committee, chaired by Linda Boylan, will be serving refreshments following the meeting. We will also be initiating three new members to the lodge. Please come to enjoy Vasa fellowship and refreshments and to welcome our new members.

At the **November 22<sup>nd</sup>** 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 30** was a great success! Best ever!!! My thanks and appreciation is extended to all who participated and helped in any way both on Saturday 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 wonderful with a great group of children. The children did a superb job and looked adorable as they sang and processed to the stage. Our Lucia was Ariana Diaz, great granddaughter of Birka member, Helen Riddle. Ariana has been participating in the Lucia procession since 2003. Her brother, Jordan, also participated as a star boy. Her mother, Melissa, was also Lucia when she was younger. I'd like to thank our soloist, Pamela Morris for her leadership and singing during the Lucia procession, pianist, Katie Fickenwirth of Ipswich, and our Fair musicians, Bob Landoni, Mark French, Dan Murphy and Warren Johnson.

On Sunday afternoon, **January 5** 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 and adults enjoyed the festivities. Thank you to Ann-Marie Breuer for teaching the game dances and reading wonderful stories for the children; to Mike Bagnulo, our Tomten. Thank you too to Judy Tanzer, Mike and Andrea Swanson, Linda Boylan, Inga-Lill Olsson, Nancy Forsstrom, June and Sharon

Guidara and other helpers. Thank you to all! The karameller that was donated by Gus and Roz brought in approximately \$84. Thank you, Gus and Roz.

**Please note:** The next Activities Committee meeting will be **Sunday, February 2, at 2:30 p.m. at the home of Marlys Mahajan in Hamilton.** The activities for the spring will be planned. The **Auditors** will also be meeting with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary to audit the financial books of the Lodge. Please contact me if you plan on attending.

**Annual dues of \$25 for 2014 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 2014. Dues are due in January.** It would be great if all dues were paid by April.

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.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **January 24<sup>th</sup> and February 28<sup>th</sup>** meetings. Please mark the dates on your new 2014 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

## . . . 'round the Lodge

- Our first Cookie Bake was a great success. It was held on the Sunday before the Jul Marknad. The bakers, Linda Boyla, Judy Tanzer, Helen with daughter Pam and granddaughter, and others, baked 22 dozen cookies, all of which quickly sold out at the Jul Marknad. They baked Linzor tarts, jam cookies, currant cookies, and spritz, holiday favorites of many Scandinavians.
- Please check Birka's website for more photos and copies of the Birka Banner. It is great to see all the photos and newsletters in full color!. Its address is [www.birka732.com](http://www.birka732.com) and is maintained by Richard Lilja, our Web Master. Thank you, Richard.
- Please notify Recording Secretary, Judy Tanzer, 3 Anthony Road, Hamilton, MA 01982, of any address changes. We appreciate your help in keeping the membership roles up to date. Her phone number is (978) 468-7407.
- **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.

---

## Calendar Summary

### January

24 Vasa Ship, first meeting of the new year, 7:30 p.m.

### February

2 Activities Committee meeting, 2:30 p.m. at Marlys Mahajan's home

28 Initiation of new members and introduction to Dalarna countryside and culture, 7:30 p.m.

## Hearty Birka Birthday Wishes to these members . . .

### . . . in January

5 Melissa Starrak      22 Gerard Tobiason  
10 Abigail Butt      25 Ann-Marie Breuer  
14 Janet Bloom

### . . . in February

1 Joan Sullivan      15 Eva Ghika  
11 Inga-Lill Olsson      15 Marlys Mahajan  
12 Elizabeth Sandberg

---

## REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

### January 24

Judy Tanzer, chair  
Gus Blomgren  
Denise Esperson,  
Mary Anne Hawkes  
Michael, Andrea Swanson  
Pamela Petronzio

### February 28

Linda Boylan, chair  
Ann DeLacey  
Audrey DiPillo  
Milton Leitmer  
Marlys Mahajan  
Marilyn Seaburg

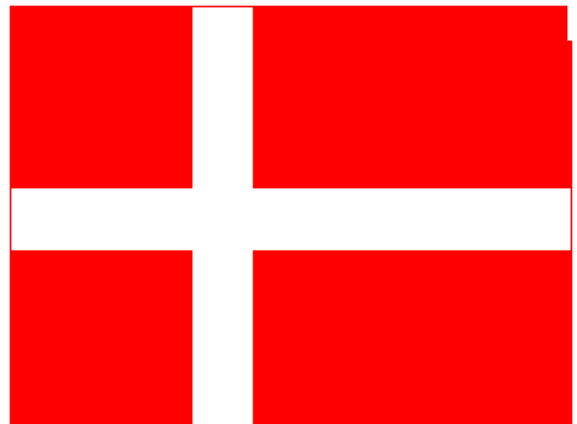
---



## Jul Marknad Fun for All

Visitors continue to be delighted at the Lodge's annual Christmas fair by the Saint Lucia procession, the Swedish baked goods, like limpa and braided coffee cakes, and the Swedish imports, like Dala Horses, calendars, and linens. Members worked diligently to insure that everyone was well fed with sandwiches, homemade lingon-berry ice cream and cookies, and glug.

The fair offers something for everyone. For the children there are children's books and the karamella. For hostesses, there are candles, linens and Christmas decorations. For families there are calendars, tree ornaments, and everyone's favorite treat, Damsuga. For everyone, there is a chance to stop and enjoy the morning with a cup of coffee and some good food. All of this is thanks to the organizational skills and productive time that our members contribute.



---

## Tree Plundering Ends Birka Lodge's Holiday Season

The Lodge closed out its holiday season with its traditional Tree Plundering party. It was a great success! The children enjoyed hearing stories of Scandinavia told by Ann-Marie Breuer, visiting with our own Tomtem, Mike Bagnulo, and learning tradition Scandinavian dances to tunes played by Bob Landoni. These and the untrimming of the Christmas tree were the highlights of the afternoon.



Photos courtesy of Mike and Andrea Swanson

---

The Birka Banner is a bi-monthly newsletter, published by Birka Lodge 732, Vasa Order of America, and on the web at [www.birka732.com](http://www.birka732.com)

Lodge Chairperson: Linda Christianson  
Editor: Marlys Mahajan  
Web Master: Richard Lilja

Q: What does it say at the bottom of Norwegian Beer Bottles?

A: Open At Other End.  
~~~~~

Q: What sign is at the bottom of Norwegian Swimming Pools?

A: No Smoking.  
~~~~~

Q: How do you sink a Swedish battleship?

A: Put it in the water.

---

Q: Why does the NEW Swedish navy have glass-bottom boats ?

A: To see the OLD Swedish navy. *-submitted by ScanFest*

Q: Why do Danish people never play hide and seek?

A: Nobody wants to look for them.

A Danish airplane was getting ready to land in Stockholm's airport. The control tower contacted the pilot and asked for his position. The Danish pilot was surprised and didn't do anything. Again the control tower contacted the pilot. "Please tell us your position." Then the pilot understood and answered: "Here I am in the front seat, as always..."

Q: What did the Norwegian train robbers say while robbing a train?

A: Okay, now, get us some guns...

### **Swede in a Pub**

A Swede was in a pub in Finland and a regular customer suggested to him:

- "I'll give you \$200, if you let me smash ten beer bottles on your head." The Swede thought for a while and finally agreed, partly because of the peer pressure. The Finn smashed the first bottle on the Swede's head, then the second and so on, but he stopped after smashing nine bottles.

- "So, when are you going to smash the tenth bottle?," asked the Swede.

- "I am not a total idiot," the Finn replied, "then I would have to give you that \$200."

One foggy night off the southwestern coast of Norway, a Swedish battle ship received a radio signal in Norwegian telling it to shift course 10 degrees to the west.

The Swedish captain bristled, and replied that the sender should shift HIS course 10 degrees to the east!

Moments later the reply came telling the Swedish ship to move 10 degrees to the west.

"I vil NOT!" screamed the captain. He turned to the radio operator and yelled, "Yu tell dat dumb norveegian to shift 10 degrees to da east!"

Again came the reply to the Swede to shift his course 10 degrees to the west.

By now the captain was livid, and he signaled "NOW YU LOOK HERE, I AM A CAPTAIN ON A SWEDISH BATTLE SHIP, AND I AM TELLING YU TO SHIFT YOUR COURSE 10 DEGREES TO THE EAST IF YU KNOW VAT'S GOOD FOR YU!"

Moments later came the reply: "Ja, vel I am at the Norveegian lighthouse and you vil shift 10 degrees to da vest, if yu know vat's good for yu!"