

Birka Banner

Birka Lodge, Vasa Order of America

January/February, 2016

Message from the Chair

Greetings to all and Happy New Year 2016 to all Birka Members. I hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas holidays and New Year celebrations with family and friends. Now that the holidays are over, it is time to begin our lodge activities for 2016.

Our first lodge meeting will be **Friday, January 22, at 7:30 p.m.** Birka member, Frank Ryan, will talk about his stamp collection, "Stamps and Stories". Please plan on attending this exciting program. The Refreshment Committee, chaired by Judy Tanzer, will provide the refreshments. A small amount of food from our Deli Table will be available for purchase from Mike Swanson. The annual report to the District Lodge will also be presented.

The **February 26** meeting will feature a cultural program presented by Cultural Leader, Ann-Marie Breuer. The Refreshment Committee, chaired by Linda Boylan will be serving refreshments following the meeting. Please come to enjoy Vasa fellowship and refreshments.

At the **November 20** 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 their current office and support the lodge. We also had the Surprise Package Auction, which raised \$153 for lodge expenses. Thank you to Ann-Marie for being the auctioneer and for all who brought packages.

Our **Christmas Fair on November 28** was a great success! 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. 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. Post Jul Fair sales are still coming in.

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, Ashley Bakos, granddaughter of Birka Members, Nancy and Gordon Hayward. Her brother, Alex, also participated as a star boy. Thank you to our soloist, Pamela Morris for her leadership and singing during the Lucia procession and also to our pianist, Helen Greene of Ipswich. I would also like to thank Anders Carlson of Natick, who sang a solo during the program. Thank you also to accordionist, Dan Mackowiak of Northboro, for providing festive holiday music during the fair.

On Sunday afternoon, **January 10**, 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. There was a small group of 22 who attended including 4 children. The rainy weather and some sickness among the members made for a small but energetic group. Thank you to Mike and Sue Bagnulo, Ann-Marie Breuer, Mike and Andrea Swanson, Gus, Roz, Eric and Greg Blomgren, Linda Boylan and other helpers. Thank you to Ann-Marie Breuer for teaching the game dances and reading wonderful stories for the children and to Mike Bagnulo

Please note: The next Activities Committee meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, February 14, at 2:30 p.m. at the home of Ann-Marie Breuer in Hamilton.** The Auditors will also be meeting on at this time 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.

Annual dues of \$25 for 2016 are 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 2016. Dues are due in January.** It would be great if all dues were paid by April, 2015.

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. I look forward to seeing many of you at the next meetings, **January 22 and February 26.** Please mark the dates on your new 2016 calendars! Your presence gives encouragement to your officers and makes more secure the future of our Order.

Happy New Year!

In truth and unity,

Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman

Marlys Mahajan
26 Appaloosa Lane
So. Hamilton, MA 01982

Hearty Birka Birthday wishes to these members:

... In January

5 Melissa Starrak
10 Abigail Butt
14 Janet Bloom
18 Eric Blomgren
18 Greg Blomgren
22 Gerald Tobiason
25 Ann-Marie Breuer
29 Tina Rawsen

... In February

11 Inga-Lill Olsson
12 Ellen Sandberg
15 Eva Ghika
15 Marlys Mahajan

REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

Stamps and Stories

January 22

Judy Tanzer, chair
Gus, Eric, Greg Blomgren
Denise Esperson,
Mary Anne Hawkes
Mike and Andrea Swanson

February 26

Linda Boylan, chair
Ann DeLacey
Audrey DiPillo
Milton Leitner
Marlys Mahajan

Reminder: Dues are now due!

If you haven't paid your dues yet, why not write out your \$25 check now and bring it to the January meeting?

... 'round the Lodge

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



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

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.

Birka Banner is a bi-monthly newsletter, published by Birka Lodge 32, Vasa Order of America, and on the web as www.birka732.com

Linda Christianson, Chairperson
Marlys Mahajan, Editor
Richard Lilja, Webmaster

Jul Marknad Fun for All

Visitors continue to be delighted at the Lodge's annual Christmas Fair. They come to enjoy and shop for Swedish baked goods, including *limpa* and coffee cake braids. Then stay to see the Lucia procession and shop for Swedish imports, such as Dala horses, calendars, and linens, and for handmade Christmas decorations. Member worked diligently to insure that everyone was well fed with sandwiches, homemade lingonberry ice cream, cookies, and *glug*.

The fair offers something for everyone: a chance to stop and enjoy the morning with a cup of coffee or hot *glug* and some good food, while being entertained by the musicians and the dancers. All of this is thanks to the organizational skills and generous gifts of time that members contribute. Thanks to all of you!

Flags of the Scandinavian Countries

We are all familiar with the Swedish flag displayed at each meeting, but were you aware that the flags of the other Scandinavian countries were so similar? See them in full color in our web newsletter!

Norwegian flag



Red field with blue cross

Finish flag



White field with blue cross

Danish flag



Red field with white cross

Icelandic flag



Blue field with red cross

Calendar of Events

January

- 22 Lodge meeting, "Stamps and Stories", 7:30 p.m.

February

- 14 Activities meeting at Ann-Marie Breuer's home, 2:30 p.m.
26 Lodge meeting, 7:30 p.m.
-

Tree Plundering Ends the Lodge's Holiday Season

Despite a rainy, rainy Sunday afternoon, the Tree Plundering was a wonderfully congenial affair. The children enjoyed hearing stories of Scandinavia told by Ann-Marie Breuer, visiting with our own Tomten, Mike Bagnulo, and learning traditional Scandinavian dances. And of course, everyone was well fed! These activities and the untrimming of the Christmas tree were the highlights of the afternoon.
