

Birka Banner

MAY-JUNE, 2013

Birka Lodge 732, Vasa Order of America

Chairperson's Message

Greetings to all! The April 26th Installation of Officers was well attended with a total of 40 members and guests. The following dignitaries attended: District Master, Marlene Patient; Grand Lodge Deputy/District Deputy Dawn Briggs, who conducted the Installation ceremonies along with her installing team from Nordic Lodge, Leif Kristiansson, PGLD/PDM, Siw Kristiansson, past District Deputy to Birka Lodge and District Executive Board Member; Ken Briggs. Also attending from the District Lodge were: Lynne Martin, District Treasurer; Michael Bagnulo, District Trustee; Shirley French, PDM/District Cultural Leader; Linda Boylan, District Executive Board Member; Michael Swanson, District Auditor; and Judy Tanzer, District Inner Guard. Their presence and support were appreciated.

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the April Installation, especially with food donations as well as setting up the hall and all who helped in the kitchen. Delicious refreshments were served and enjoyed by all. We certainly have some great cooks at Birka Lodge! We received rave comments from our guests on the wonderful table of sandwiches and desserts. Thank you, thank you to all! Special thank you to Ann-Marie Breuer for making the birthday cake—a Princess Torte—which was enjoyed by all. Thank you also to Gus and Roz Blomgren for donating the raffle basket. Shirley French, District Cultural Leader, won the basket of summer fun. Also, thank you to the March Refreshment Committee for the delicious food we enjoyed that night.

The **May 24th Meeting** will include a short Memorial Service to remember our members who have died this past year. The Kitchen Committee, chaired by Judy Tanzer, will provide refreshments. Following the meeting, we will have a May Basket auction. Please bring a decorated spring basket or gift bag with plants, flowers, or something that can be planted. Be as creative as you choose.

The final meeting before the summer break will be **June 28**. There will be a Midsommar theme and cultural program. The Kitchen Committee, co-chaired by Karin Caves and Matilda Halloran, will provide the traditional strawberry shortcake dessert. Cultural Leader, Ann-Marie Breuer will be presenting a program on Midsommar traditions. Please plan on

attending. Delegates to the District Convention in September will be elected.

The lodge has planned a summer outing for a Sunday in August. **Sign up sheet with cost and further details will be available at the May and June meetings.** Ann-Marie Breuer will have more information at these meetings. Family and friends are invited.

The next Activities Committee meeting will be held on **June 2 at 3:00 p.m.** at the home of Andrea and Mike Swanson in Rowley. All officers and members are invited to attend. In April, the Activities Committee met at the home of Gus and Roz Blomgren. Thank you, Gus and Roz.

Reminder: 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. **(For those who have not paid the 2013 dues of \$25,** please mail your dues to: Financial Secretary, Linda Boylan, 12 Upton Lane, Boxford, MA 01921, payable to: Birka Lodge No. 732.

If you have not been able to attend a lodge meeting this year, it is not too late. We miss you. There are two lodge meetings left—in May and June—before the summer break. I hope to see you soon. Come and support your lodge and its officers. New program booklets for 2013–2014 will be available at the lodge meetings. Thank you, Linda Boylan.

In closing, I would like to thank the lodge for re-electing me as your Chairman for the coming year. Thank you to all the officers who have taken an office for the coming year. I appreciate the help and support of all lodge members. Your presence helps give encouragement to your officers and make more secure the future of our Order. Best wishes for a healthy and safe summer.

Glad Midsommar! Happy Summer!

In truth and unity,

Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman

Hearty Birka Birthday Wishes to these members . . .



. . . in May

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 William Guidara | |
| 13 Richard Lilja | 22 Linda Reidinger |
| 17 Linda Christianson | 25 Al Reidlinger |

. . . in June

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 4 Ernest Sandberg | 12 Judy Tanzer |
| 4 Ann Delacey | 17 Richard Johns |
| 8 Janet Dawe | 28 Ellen Greenberg |

. . . in July

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 3 Nancy Hayward | 15 Nancy Olson |
| 8 Amy Hawkes | 16 Richard Sunman |
| 11 Audrey DiPillo | 24 William Ghen |
| 13 Pamela Petronzio | 28 Sandra DiPillo |

14 June Guidara

. . . in August

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 11 Denise Esperson | 20 Janet Muller |
| 16 Polly Berggren | 24 Lara Collins |
| 17 Matilda Halloran | 26 Ambia O. Smith |
| 17 Gordon Hayward | 26 Milton Leitner |
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REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

May Basket Auction

May 24

Judy Tanzer, chair
Kari Ashness
Sue and Mike Bagnulo
Linda Christianson
Ann DeLacey
Mary Anne Hawkes
Sharon Mikutel

Midsommar Strawberry Fest

June 22

Karin Caves, co-chair
Matilda Halloran, co-chair
Eva Ghika
Ann-Marie Breuer
Carol Landoni

Bring one and buy one!

May Baskets

May 24 meeting

Calendar Summary

May

24 May Basket Auction, 7:30 p.m.

June

2 Activities Committee meeting, 3 p.m. at
Mike and Andrea Swanson's home,
Rowley
28 Midsommar Strawberry Festival,
7:30 p.m.

August

24 Summer Outing: Essex River Cruise,
2:30pm, \$25.00 per person

The Secret to A Long and Happy Marriage

Ole, who is approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, is asked by his friends to tell them how he had managed to stay married to the same woman all these years.

Ole thinks for a moment and replies, "Vell, I've always tried to treat her nice and spend da money on her. And on our 25th anniversary I took her to Norway."

One of the guys asks, "So, what are your special plans for your 50th anniversary?"

Ole replied, "I'm thinkin' a goin' back to get her."

. . . 'round the Lodge

Every garden can use a little something new and colorful at this time of year. So come to our May Basket Auction and find just the thing! Remember to bring along something from your garden to share with the others.

An August outing is in the works, similar to the Pirate Ship cruise that we all enjoyed last summer. Details have not been worked out yet, but one thing being considered is an Essex River cruise. Come to the May and June meeting to find out all the final arrangements. It is sure to be a relaxing weekend afternoon.

The Lodge was recently notified of the passing of Barbara Kanerva of Danvers, one of our members. She died last December. Our condolences are extended to her family.

Remember to check Birka's website at www.birka732.com. See your newsletters in color or reminisce over photos of past gatherings collected by our webmaster, Richard Lilja. Thank you, Richard. Also, let Richard or Marlys know if you would prefer to receive your newsletter via email, saving the Lodge the cost of printing and mailing.

Please notify Recording Secretary, Judy Tanzer, 3 Anthony Road, Hamilton, MA 01982 (Tel: 978-468-7407) of any address changes. We appreciate your helping us keep the membership roles up to date.



Swedish strawberry bliss to sweeten Midsummer

Despite the long, cold winter, strawberry growers in Sweden have announced that this year's harvest has survived and will be ready to be gobbled down in line with Swede's dessert-table traditions at Midsummer.

"We're going to have the strawberries ready for midsummer!" Calle Ericsson, chairman of the nation's berry growers, announced in a statement.

Strawberries are grown in Sweden on roughly 2,500 hectares of land, an area corresponding with about 3,500 football fields. An annual haul yields around 30 million litres of the berry, and Swedes welcome the summer treat with open arms.

In fact, 73 percent of Swedish people prefer the taste of strawberries grown in Sweden to those imported from abroad, according to a May survey by pollsters YouGov. Despite this, imported strawberry numbers continue to bloom, with a record 7,587 tonnes imported last year - around half from Belgium.

But the delicious treat is mostly grown outside rather than in controlled conditions, meaning the fruit is extremely susceptible to bad weather.

Swedish strawberries are usually available from May and up until October.

Midsommar in Scandinavia

Land of the Midnight Sun! This special event is celebrated throughout the Scandinavian countries, each country with its own special traditions. Pagan in origin, but adopted by Christians as St. John's Day, it is today primarily a secular holiday.

The common thread of all the MidSummer celebrations is joy in new life and the hope of a happy, healthy summer. In pagan times healing herbs were collected and travels to healing MidSommerdagen has been celebrated on the Saturday that falls between June 19 and 25. Bonfires are not part of the Swedish tradition, but dancing around a MidSommar pole is. It is a time of great celebration, second only to Christmas, throughout Scandinavia.

waters were common. Bonfires chased the witches away, all in preparation for a glorious summer. When Christianity arrived, people were loathed to give up these summer preparations, so the Church established St. John's Day, on June 23, traditionally the date of the birth of John the Baptist. MidSummer is still celebrated as Sankthansaften, or St. Hans Day, in Norway, Denmark and Finland. The pagan traditions exist side by side with the new Christian traditions. The date of MidSomnardagen was originally on June 21, the summer solstice. However, in Norway, Denmark, and Finland it is celebrated on St. John's Day, June 23. Traditions in these countries always include a large bonfire, beside a lake or the ocean, as well as festivals in the cities. In Sweden since 1955

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

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Questionable Sign

Ole is the pastor of the local Norwegian Lutheran Church and Pastor Sven is the minister of the Swedish Covenant Church across the road. They are pounding a sign into the ground that says:

**DA END ISS NEAR!
TURN YERSELF AROUND NOW
BAFOR IT'S TOO LATE!**

A car speeds past them, the driver sees the sign, leans out his window and yells, "Leave me alone, you Skandihoovian religious nuts!" A minute later they hear screeching tires and a big splash.

Rev. Ole turns to Pastor Sven and asks, "Do ya tink maybe da sign should yust say, "Bridge Out?"