



Birka732.com

Birka Banner

[Birka Lodge #732](#),

Vasa Order of America

May/June, 2014

Chairperson's Message

Greetings to all! The April 25th Installation of Officers was well attended with a total of 40 members and guests. The following dignitaries attended: District Master, Marlene Ekstrand; Grand Lodge Deputy/District Deputy Dawn Briggs, who conducted the Installation ceremonies along with her installing team from Nordic Lodge: Ken Briggs, Past District Executive Board Member; Ken Briggs Jr., a member of Nordic Lodge and District Master. Also attending from the District Lodge were: Linda Boylan, Vice District Master; Michael Bagnulo, District Executive Board Member; Robert Ekstrand, District Outer Guard; Michael Swanson, District Auditor; Judy Tanzer, District Inner Guard; and Marian Parco, Past Grand Lodge Deputy/PDM.

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the April Installation, especially with food donations, as well as setting up the hall and helping 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 sandwiches and desserts. Thank you, thank you to all!

A special thank you goes to Ann-Marie Breuer for donating the floral centerpieces and the birthday cake. Thank you also to Gus and Roz Blomgren for donating the raffle basket. Also, thank you to the March Refreshment Committee for the delicious food we enjoyed.

At the **May 23rd Meeting**, we will be having our Memorial Service to remember our departed members who have died this past year. The Kitchen Committee, chaired by Ann DeLacey, will provide refreshments. Following the meeting, we will have a May Basket auction. Please bring a decorated Spring Basket/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 27th**. 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 her trip to Sweden earlier in the month with Birka member, Judy Tanzer. Please plan on attending.

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.** There will be additional information at the meetings. Family and friends are invited.

The next Activities Committee Meeting will be on **September 14th at 3:00 p.m.** at the home of Andrea and Mike Swanson in Rowley. All officers and members are invited to share their thoughts and help plan for the Christmas festivities.

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 medical assistance 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 2014 dues of \$25, please mail your dues to: Financial Secretary, Linda Boylan, 12 Upton Lane, Boxford, MA 01921. Make your check 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 2014–2015 will be available at these 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 encourages to your officers and makes 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

Calendar Summary

May

23 Memorial Service and May Basket Auction, 7:30 p.m.

June

27 Strawberry Festival, 7:30 p.m.

August

17 or 24 Summer outing: *Isle of Shoals*, sailing out of Portsmouth, NH. Details at June meeting

September

14 Next Activities meeting, Michael and Andrea Swanson's home, 3:00 p.m.

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 14 June Guidara

8 Amy Hawkes 15 Nancy Olson

11 Audrey DiPillo 16 Richard Sunman

13 Pamela Petronzio 24 William Ghen

. . . 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

. . . 'round the Lodge

Congratulations to Birka Lodge's officers for the 2014-2015 season! Audrey DePillo is a new addition to the board, taking over her sister's position as an auditor. Mike Bagnulo's new title is Assistant Master of Ceremonies, and Sue Bagnulo will take over Mike's former position as Inner Guard. The rest of the slate of officers remains the same as last year. Thank you to all officers for stepping up to keep the Lodge running smoothly!

We sadly note the passing of long-time member Miriam Lane in early May. Details of the funeral arrangements will be available at the next Lodge meeting.

Come share the wonderful weather of a New England summer with your friends from Birka Lodge. A cruise around the Isle of Shoals in Portsmouth harbor is planned for August. The cruise is a half day excursion. More details will follow at the May and June meeting.

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.

Easter Parade

Members had great fun creating Easter hats for our own Easter parade. The Blomgren family went all out, as you can see in the photo below.



Sheila Sunman came dressed as our very own Easter bunny. Then the Refreshment Committee's Inga-Lill Olsson also presented us with a wonderful Swedish-themed birthday cake! A warm, wonderful time was had by all, despite the temperature outside!



REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

May Basket Auction

*Bring one and buy one!
May Baskets*

May 23 meeting

How Did They Get to Be Separate Countries?

During Napoleon's reign, Denmark-Norway was a separate country from Sweden. During Napoleon's war against Russia, Denmark-Norway sided with the French and Napoleon; Sweden sided with the Russians. In the treaty following Napoleons' defeat, Norway was ceded to Sweden, and Sweden became the United Kingdom of Sweden and Norway. Norway retained its own constitution and parliament, but Sweden controlled all its dealings with foreign countries.

Norway's foreign interests were at odds with those of Sweden, and when Norway's government walked out of parliament rather than to accept Sweden's foreign counsels in 1905, Sweden capitulated to avoid a constitutional crisis, and Norway became independent.

May 24

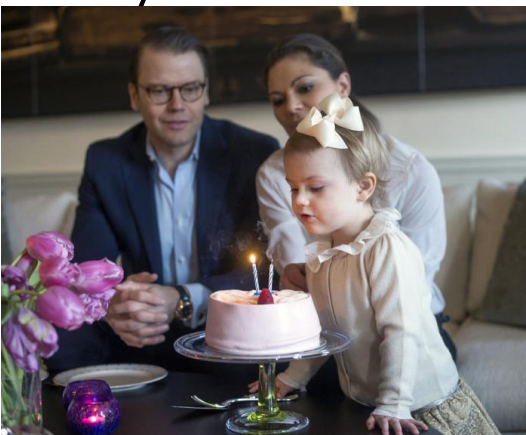
Ann Delacey, chair
Judy Tanzer
Kari Ashness
Sue and Mike Bagnulo
Linda Christianson
Mary Anne Hawkes
Sharon Mikutel
Marlys Mahajan

Midsommar Strawberry Fest

June 22

Karin Caves, co-chair
Matilda Halloran, co-chair
Eva Ghika

In case you missed it



Look who's turning 2

H.R.H. Princess Estelle of Sweden turned two on Sunday, February 23rd 2014. Still Sweden's youngest princess?

Princess Estelle turned two on Sunday, February 23rd. Of course she celebrated with a cake with two candles and Haga Palace with her parents, Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel, and most certainly some presents, but maybe she's most curious about her new cousin in New York? H.R.H. Princess Estelle ... possibly now the second youngest Swedish Princess. Whether the newborn

daughter of Princess Madeleine of Sweden will be a princess or not is likely still an open issue:

Princess or not?

The history professor at University of Lund, Dick Harrison, who blogs on history in the Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet was recently quoted on the subject.

"There are a number of rules that have to be lived up to for the child to become part of the act of succession. If the child becomes an American citizen only, which is quite possible since both Madeleine and Chris live in the U.S., it will not become part of the succession. However, the child may have dual citizenships, as long as one of them is Swedish," says Harrison. "Chris is a Catholic, so it is technically possible for the child to inherit that faith, in which case she cannot become part of the succession. The child also has to grow up mainly in Sweden. There's no percentage of exactly how much time of the child's life has to be spent here, but it is not enough to only spend summers in Sweden. However, where the child is born has no bearing on it at all. If all these rules are fulfilled, then the baby girl is number five in the succession act, after Crown Princess Victoria, Princess Estelle, Prince Carl Philip and Princess Madeleine."

And will she become a princess? "That title is decided by the King. The decision has to do with whether the parents follow the rules for the act of succession. The King's sisters' children have neither prince- nor princess titles, and that has to do with the change in the Swedish act of succession in 1980, when only direct relatives to the King were included in the act of succession. It will remain this way until there's a change in the constitution, so in a couple generations a whole lot of people can get a spot in the act of succession. If the child grows up according to the rules of succession it would surprise me a lot if she didn't receive a dukedom." Harrison adds that the nicer the title, the more interesting for media, but points out that also has to do with where the child grows up—if she grows up on the other side of the pond (in this case, the U.S.), and is not very accessible, then Swedish media's interest will surely cool off. However, if she participates at different ceremonies, she might become the nation's little darling, and thus the interest and popularity will increase. Chris O'Neill's lack of a prince title has nothing to do with the child's title or lack thereof.

Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden holding little Leonore. Photo: Princess Madeleine, courtesy of Prinsessan



Meet Princess Leonore Lilian Maria

'Mormor och Morfar' .. Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia with Princess Leonore Lilian Maria.

Here she is – H.R.H. Princess Leonore Lilian Maria, daughter of **Princess Madeleine of Sweden and Chris O'Neill**. Lilian after the recently deceased Princess Lilian of Sweden, and Maria presumably after Chris O'Neill's mother's middle name. Born in New York, the little princess is also Duchess of Gotland.

A Te Deum service will be held in the Royal Chapel at Stockholm Palace on March 2nd. The name Leonore is a variant of the Greek Eleanor, and means "sun ray, shining light, compassion".

H.R.H Princess Madeleine of Sweden and her husband Chris O'Neill welcomed their first baby, a daughter on February 20 2014. On Feb. 21st, 21-gun royal salutes were fired throughout Sweden to celebrate the occasion: [Royal Salute for the Princess!](#)



Charles Lindbergh and the Spirit of St. Louis on May 31 in 1927 after "their" transatlantic flight, which took place on May 20th and May 21st the same year



On May 21 in 1927, Charles Lindbergh lands in Paris after having performed the first-ever solo flight over the Atlantic Ocean. Above: Charles Lindbergh and his monoplane, The Spirit of St. Louis

May 21 in Swedish-American History

Charles Lindbergh lands in Paris after having performed the first-ever solo flight over the Atlantic Ocean.

May 21 in Swedish-American History

1927: Charles Lindbergh lands in Paris after having performed the first-ever solo flight over the Atlantic Ocean.

He flew from New York to Paris in 33.5 hours in his monoplane, Spirit of St. Louis. Lindberg (1902-1974), nicknamed “Slim” and “Lucky Lindy,” was born in Detroit with family roots in Smedstorp in Skåne.

Charles Lindbergh takes off early in the morning on Friday, May 20 on his “partner”, dubbed the Spirit of St. Louis, which is burdened by a heavy load of 450 US gallons of gasoline, weighing approximately 2,710 lbs. The runway (Roosevelt Field, Long Island) is muddy and wet at take off, and over the next 33.5 hours Lindbergh and the Spirit (Lindbergh always referred to the two of them as “we”) faced many challenges, including storm clouds at 10,000 feet, wave tops as low as 10 feet, icing, flying blindly through fog for several hours, and navigating only by the stars (when visible). They land at Le Bourget in Paris at 10.22 PM on Saturday, May 21st.

A crowd of 150,000 spectators storms the field, dragging Lindbergh out of the cockpit, and literally carrying him above their heads for almost half an hour. Some damage is done to the Spirit by too ardent souvenir hunters, before Lindbergh and the Spirit are eventually rescued by a group of military fliers, soldiers and police who take them to safety in a nearby hangar. From that moment on, however, life for the American-Swedish aviator is never the same. His successful flight gives him instantaneous and lifelong worldwide fame. On August 31st his flight is certified as the Class-C World Record for non-stop flight for the distance of 5,809 kilometers (3,137 nautical miles or 3,610 miles).

The 25-year old was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1902, but spent most of his childhood in Little Falls, Minnesota, and Washington, D.C. He was the third child of Swedish immigrant Charles August Lindbergh (birth name Carl Månsson) and the only child of his second wife, Evangeline Lodge Lindbergh. Apart from being a major American aviator, Lindbergh was also an author, inventor, explorer and social activist. In 1932, Lindbergh and his wife, Anne, lost their son, Charles Jr., who was kidnapped and murdered in what was dubbed “The Crime of the Century.”

Later in life, Lindbergh, was engaged in environmental causes. From the 1960s on, he campaigned to protect endangered species like humpback and blue whales, was instrumental in establishing protections for the controversial Filipino group, the Tasaday, African tribes, and supporting the establishment of a national park. While studying the native flora and fauna of the Philippines, Lindbergh became involved in an effort to protect the Philippine Eagle. In his final years, he stressed the need to regain the balance between the world and the natural environment, and spoke against the introduction of supersonic airliners. Today The Spirit of St. Louis hangs in the atrium of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC. Charles Lindbergh passed away in 1974.



Bonfires are lit all over Sweden on April 30, the night of Walpurgis, 'Valborgsmässoafton'

'Happy Walpurgis!' Valborg and May First:

Two occasions when nearly every choral singer in the country let it rip

Listen to: **Valborgskören, Umeå: Sköna Maj Välkommen...**

Choral singing is a popular pastime in Sweden, and one occasion when nearly every choral singer in the country let it rip is the evening of April 30, known as Walpurgis Night or, more strictly as Walburga's Eve (Valborgsmässoafton), being the eve of the commemoration of St Walburga's canonization on May 1. Bonfires are lit, often on hilltops where they will be visible from a long way off, and when the crackling of the fire is at its height, a number of gentlemen (though nowadays as often ladies) step forward, many wearing peaked caps with a white top and some sort of emblem above the peak. They proceed to sing a number of songs, which are the same everywhere in the country and maintain that this evening marks the end of winter and the coming of spring. Rather touching if, meantime, sleet and snow are bidding fair to put the fire out, but most years, in the south of Sweden at least, spring is well into its stride.

To find a celebration in Swedish America near you, see [Nordstjernen Events Calendar](#)

Choral singing is a late and middle-class addition to the ancient practice of gathering around a fire on the evening before May Day, and probably derives from the manner in which students in Uppsala and Lund have been celebrating the arrival of spring for two centuries now.

Scaring off predators or witches...

But the bonfire goes back further than that. In Sweden and many other countries too, the lighting of bonfires one evening in spring was an ancient custom and it is a moot point among scholars whether this was done to scare off predators before the cattle and sheep were put out to graze, or whether there was some supernatural,

magical purpose involved. The Germans, for example, sought through the fires to protect themselves against the witches gathering this night to worship the devil.

The Swedish custom is descended from the virulent Walpurgis fires of north Germany and since most German immigrants were to be found in Stockholm and surroundings, this is where the custom first took root. Other parts of Sweden earlier had other bonfire evenings, e.g., around Easter but the capital city always set the tone of things and so the bonfires and the singing have now fallen in line with the Stockholm way of doing things.

Saint Walburga was an English born saint who traveled as a missionary to the Frankish Empire in present day Germany in the 700s. The feast of Walburga is on February 25 in the Catholic calendar, the day of the Saint's death in 777 or 779. In Sweden as in Finland the canonization has become the date of commemoration and the evening prior Walpurgis Night and in Germany the witches' Sabbath.

'Första Maj' - May First

It was no coincidence when, during the 1880s, the Labor movement choose May Day for its annual manifestation. In many parts of Europe the day had been a secular festival, a kind administrative New Year's Day in bygone society. This was the day when accounts for the year were presented and new officers were elected for the year to come. Work would be at a standstill, giving journeymen and apprentices a day off without any need for churchgoing. In Stockholm from the early 19th century onwards, May Day developed into a popular festival in Djurgården Park, complete with procession and royal visit.

As the 19th century wore on, this holiday was turned into an annual rally of industrial workers, at the same time as the employers' organizations and authorities acquired different routines and activities.

Source: Professor Jan-Öjvind Swahn



You know you've been in Sweden too long when ...

1. It's acceptable to eat lunch at 11 a.m.
2. You think Leif 'Loket' Olsson is entertaining.
3. You rummage through your plastic bag collection to see which ones you should keep to take to the store and which can be sacrificed to garbage.
4. You associate pea soup with Thursday.
5. The first thing you do upon entering a bank/post office/pharmacy is look for the queue number machine.

More of this subject in the next newsletter!

The Birka Banner Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication, that is published by Birka Lodge 732, Vasa Order of America, and on the web at www.birka732.com or email us at birka732@verizon.net

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