

# BIRKA BANNER

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

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2008

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## Chairman's Message

Greetings to all and welcome back from your summer vacations. I hope everyone enjoyed their vacations to travel, visit, relax and return refreshed. It is hard to believe that summer is over and it is time to plan the fall activities at Birka Lodge. I hope everyone survived the many rainy days we had during the summer months. I know my vacation was very wet!

I would like to thank the members of the June Refreshment Committee, Karin Caves, Matilda Halloran and Eva Ghika. Delicious strawberry and peach shortcake was enjoyed by all.

Thank you also to Lois and Ed Johnson and Sue Bagnulo for organizing our summer outing to Boston on the Salem Ferry on Saturday, August 23rd. It was a beautiful day in Boston and everyone enjoyed meeting at Capt's Waterfront Restaurant in Salem for dinner. What shall we do next summer?

The first meeting for the fall will be held on **September 26th** at 7:30 p.m. The program will be our Harvest Auction (Skordefest). Members are asked to bring a vegetable, fruit, flowers, etc. (from your garden if you have one) or a pumpkin, potted herb or fall plant. Our auctioneer will be Roz Blomgren. An evening you won't want to miss! Proceeds from the auction will go to Birka's general fund to help with Christmas Fair expenses. A great time to fellowship with Birka members and catch up on our summer adventures! We will also be initiating two new members. Come and welcome our new members.

The **October 24th meeting** is our annual Halloween/Hexan's Potluck Supper at **6:30 p.m.** Everyone attending is asked to bring a main dish, salad or dessert. If your dish needs to be heated in the oven, please arrive between 6:00-6:15 p.m. We would like to begin at 6:30 p.m. The lodge will provide coffee and cold drinks. This has been a very successful event and we have some great cooks at the lodge. Dessert will be served following the meeting. **Costumes are preferred.** Use your imagination. Prizes will be awarded. Children are welcome and prizes for children's costumes will also be awarded. Come in costume for the Potluck! Who knows who or what you'll meet!

At the September and October meetings, the sign up sheet for volunteers for the Christmas Fair, **November 29th** at the **Community House** will be available. As always we will need help with set up the night before, clean up, publicity, booth help, etc. We will also need donations for grabs, home baked goods, etc. This is Birka Lodge's major fund raising event of the year and the support and help of all lodge members is needed to make this year's Christmas Fair as successful as in past years. As a reminder, throughout the year, I have asked for a volunteer to help/coordinate with Eva Ghika the open-faced sandwiches for the Christmas Fair. We are still in need of someone to help with preparing the ingredients for the open-faced sandwiches. Please contact Eva or myself for the recipes. Your help is appreciated. Thank you.

The Activities Committee met on Saturday, September 13 at 3:00 p.m. at the home of Mike and Andrea Swanson. I encourage all officers and members to attend upcoming Activities Committee meetings to help plan our Christmas Fair and upcoming events. The next Activities Committee meeting will be announced at the September 26th meeting.

At the June 27th meeting, the lodge members voted to have our 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Danversport Yacht Club on **Saturday, May 2, 2009** from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. More details and information will be available in the months ahead. Please mark your 2009 calendars to celebrate this milestone in the history of Birka Lodge.

**Reminder:** Please notify the Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Judy Tanzer, 3 Anthony Road, Hamilton, MA 01982, telephone no. 978-468-7407, of any address changes. Thank you.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **September 26th meeting and the October 24th Potluck Supper.** Please mark the dates! Come and support your lodge and it's officers. Happy Autumn! Welcome back!

In truth and unity,  
Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman



# Happy Birthday!

## SEPTEMBER

3	Edith Sanborn	14	Karin Caves
4	Michael Swanson	20	Ronald Sandberg
7	Warren Johnson	22	Nancy Sanford
10	Miriam Hooper	26	Susan Bagnulo
11	Lois Johnson		

## OCTOBER

2	Vera Bjorkander	20	Joseph Birch
4	Eddie Thurnquist	20	Barbara Lewis
5	Rut Johnson	21	Ed Johnson
7	Vincent Ghika	25	Karen Roman
15	Paul French	30	Robert Lewis
17	Anita Adams		
20	Carolyn Bartlett		

## REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

### *September 26- Harvest Fair - Auction*

Pamela Petronzio, Co-Chair  
Audrey DiPillo, Co-Chair  
Denise Esperson  
Linda Flanagan  
Bill Ghen  
Richard Lilja  
Joan Sullivan

### *October 24 - Hexan's Potluck Supper*

Eva Ghika, Chair  
Carolyn Bartlett  
Janet Dawe  
Linda Boylan  
Gus Blomgren  
Bob Blomgren  
Janet Muller

## Schedule of Upcoming Events

- Sept. 13th - 3:00 p.m. Activities Committee Mtg.  
Andrea & Mike Swanson home  
Sept. 26 - 7:30 p.m. Harvest Fair Auction Meeting  
Oct. - 3:00 p.m. Activities Committee Meeting  
Oct. 24 - 6:30 p.m. Halloween Potluck Supper Mtg.  
Oct. 25 - District Harvest Fair  
Nov. 22 - Dec 6th - Methuen Festival of Trees  
Nov. 29 - Birka Ju l Fair

## PERSONALS

Gunvor Breuer is recuperating from recent surgery and is now living at the Caldwell Skilled Nursing and Rehab. Center in Ipswich. She would very much like to hear from her many Birka friends. Gunvor was among the original group of Vasa members who founded Birka Lodge 25 years ago. Her generosity and expertise have been very much appreciated by the lodge.

Miriam Lane's husband, Charles, of Rockport, passed away during the summer. He was 101.

## SUMMER CRUISE

Everyone had to agree that our 2008 summer outing - a cruise to Boston aboard the Salem Ferry - was a resounding success. On a picture perfect day we took the 10:00 a.m. ferry, docking at Central Wharf, next to the Aquarium. Some of us stayed at the Aquarium, while others explored the city, the FanuelHallarea, and the North End, while the more adventurous took the Harbor Island Tour to explore the outer islands.

We finished our day by taking the ferry back to Salem and having a group dinner on the upper outdoor deck of the Captain's Waterfront Restaurant, at Pickering Wharf overlooking the "Friendship", Derby Wharf and the many yachts in Salem Harbor. Could it have been any more perfect? Well yes, it could have been if Roz and Gus Blomgren and family hadn't missed the 3 pm ferry -by inches- and missed our group dinner.

See Page 4 for picture highlights.





## SVALBARD THE ARCTIC LAND

Svalbard is a group of islands located in the Arctic Ocean, about 1,000 km south of the North Pole. Most of the human presence is concentrated in Spitsbergen, the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. Two thirds of the archipelago are 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 of 39,000 sq km, which is 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 on 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, school, 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*

## VÄSTERGÖTLAND

Fuel from old clothes, that is what they have come up with at the college in Borås. The initiative came from Borås' recycling station, Sobacken. About 17,000 tons of textile refuse goes there every year. Now Professor Mohammed Taherzadeh has found a way to change cotton fabrics, with the help of yeast, into ethanol. Eventually the citizens of Västergötland will be able to drive their cars with ethanol from their discarded jeans and T-shirts.

Source: *SweMail*

## FESTIVAL OF TREES



BirkaLodge is again planning to take part in the Methuen Festival of Trees, November 22nd to December 6th. This is a major fund raiser for the Methuen Historical Society and over 200 trees are decorated by various groups and are on display at the Brooks Properties Building on Branch St. in Methuen. Donations are used for historical preservation.

In 2007 a group from Birka decorated a 5 foot artificial tree with mostly donated Scandinavian ornaments. At the end of the viewing dates the trees were raffled off. Our tree proved to be very popular and as a result many people came to our Christmas Jul Fair in November. This year the committee plans to use *straw* as their theme.

We need ornaments for the 2008 tree - Scandinavian if you have them. Come help decorate on Saturday, November 15th. Call Gus Blomgren for details.



Here's our 2007 decorating team :  
Inga-LillOlsson, Ann-MarieBreuer, Linda Christianson  
Bob and Carol Landoni, Gus Blomgren, Sue Bagnulo  
and her grandson Joe.



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