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Birka Banner

Birka Lodge, Vasa Order of America

September/October 2015

Message from the Chair

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. The summer was pleasantly hot, which was great for vacations and sunbathing! Soon it will be cool with fall weather temperatures!

I would like to thank the members of the June Refreshment Committee, Karin Caves, Matilda Halloran, Eva Ghika, and John Caves. We all enjoyed their delicious strawberry and peach shortcake.

Thank you to Marlys Mahajan for arranging our 2015 summer outing, a cruise around Cape Ann on Saturday, August 22nd. We had a great group of 28 including Past District Master and Grand Lodge Activities Director Marlene Patient and her husband, Ron. It was a great day—the weather cooperated.

The first meeting for the fall will be held on **September 25** at 7:30 P.M. Christina Mealey, Cultural Center Director at the Scandinavian Living Center in West Newton will be speaking about the Cultural Programs offered at the facility. It should be a very interesting program. We will also have a report from the Delegates to the District Convention recently held in Leominster on September 18–20. Birka's delegates were Ann-Marie Breuer, Eric and Greg Blomgren and Janet Dawe. An evening you won't want to miss! A great time to fellowship with Birka members and catch up on summer vacations.

The **October 23rd 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 and 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 encouraged.** Use your imagination. Children are welcome. 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 28th** at the **Community House**, will be available. As always we need help with set-up the night before, clean up, publicity, and booth help. We will also need donations for grabs and home baked goods. 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.

The next Activities Committee meeting in October will be announced at the September lodge meeting. I encourage all officers and members to attend to help plan our Christmas Fair and upcoming events.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **September 25th meeting and the October 23rd Potluck Supper.** Please mark the dates! Come and support your lodge and its officers. New program booklets for 2015–2016 are available at the lodge meetings.

Happy Autumn! Your presence gives encouragement to your officers and makes more secure the future of our Order. Welcome back!

In Truth and Unity,

Linda Christianson, PDM, Chairman



Hearty Birka
Birthday wishes to
these members:

... in September

3 Claire Glover	14 Karen Caves
4 Mike Swanson	18 Naomi Graves
7 Warren E Johnson	22 Sharon Mikutel
11 Louise Johnson	26 Sue Bagnulo

... in October

4 Eddie Thurnquist	14 Sven Hyberts
5 Rut Johnson	17 Anita Adams
7 Vincent Ghika	25 Karen Roman

REFRESHMENT COMMITTEES

Autumn's Arrival

September 25

Audrey DiPillo, chair

Abigail Butt

Ann Delacey

Kari DeLacey

Bill Ghen

Naomi Gray

Andrea/Ron Holmgren

Richard Lilja

Tina Rawson

Halloween/Hexan Potluck

October 23

Janet Muller, chair

Frank Ryan

Gus/Eric/Greg Blomgren

Linda Boylan

Janet Dawe



... 'round the lodge

Congratulations to John Caves, winner of one of the \$1,000 District scholarships. John has been an active member of Birka Lodge for many years, especially during the Christmas Fairs. He is the son of member Karen Caves, who also has given much of her time to the Lodge. Look for his winning essay in the next issue of the District newsletter!

Judy Tanzer, unfortunately, was unable to join us as planned for the cruise around Cape Anne last month. The previous day a tree had fallen on her deck and dining room, knocking a hole in the ceiling. Wishing you speedy work by your contractor, Judy!

Ann DeLacey had an eventful day in August 13, when a young man ran a red light at Route 28 and Concord Street in Reading as she was driving through the intersection. The accident totaled both cars, but neither she nor he were hurt, thankfully.



For all college age and soon-to-be college age members: The national lodge, Vasa Order of America, gives out several scholarships each year. The deadline for applications has been in December in the past. Watch the Vasa website for details about this year's application process.

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

Thank you, Richard.

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



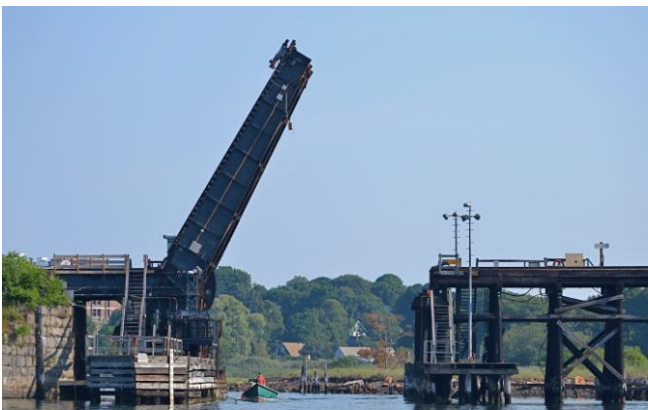
Summer Outing a Success

Our summer outing on Saturday, August 22, was a lovely day on the water, even though the skies hinted at rain. Our chartered ship cruised the entire Gloucester Harbor and Annisquam River with Captain Steve.

As we cruised we saw the three Gloucester lighthouses: Ten Pound Island Light, Eastern Point Light, and Annisquam Point Light, with Captain Steve telling us stories about each. We also passed the 100-year-old Annisquam River railroad bridge (shown below), two old mansions that have been turned into museums (Hammond Castle and the Sleeper McCann House), and other interesting sites. Even the Essex county natives learned a few new things about Gloucester, the city in their backyards.



Eastern Point Lighthouse was first commissioned in 1829 and has been upgraded many times.



A close-up view of the gears beneath the aging Annisquam River bridge was fascinating!

Calendar of Events

September

25 Autumn's Arrival lodge meeting,
7:30 p.m.

October

23 Halloween/Hexan lodge meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Reminders . . .

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. 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.

For those who have not paid your 2015 dues of \$25, you are now in arrears. Please mail your dues to the Financial Secretary, Linda Boylan at 12 Upton Lane, Boxford, MA 01921. Make your check payable to: Birka Lodge No. 732.

New program booklets for the 2015–2016 year are available at the September and October meetings, if you didn't pick one up in the spring. It contains the meetings and plans for the year, as well as a list of the Lodge officers.

A NORWEGIAN answers the phone at 3 a.m. Wrong number, so the caller apologizes.

"That's OK," said the Norwegian. "I had to get up to answer the phone anyway."

Kanelbullens dag!

Let's celebrate Kanelbullens dag (the Day of the Cinnamon bun, October 4), it's easy and quite gratifying...



Celebrate Kanelbullens Dag with a cinnamon roll or two.

October 4 is Kanelbullens dag

Celebrating it is really easy, you don't have to do anything, but eat a cinnamon bun (or two). If you feel like it, you can of course bake them also. Kanelbullens dag has been celebrated in Sweden on October 4 since 1999, when it was founded by Hembakningsrådet as a way to celebrate their 40th anniversary. The purpose was to honor the Swedish tradition of baking at home. What you can do to make this a brighter day? How about baking some cinnamon buns and giving some away to your neighbor? Or bake with your children? Or bake some tonight and bring some to work tomorrow and share with your colleagues? Remember, Swedes don't glaze their cinnamon buns!

We have to admit there are more ways than one to.. well, devour the taste of a freshly baked Swedish 'kanelbulle' Here's a link to recipes for the classic, the fancy, the jubilant and the quick: [Make your own cinnamon buns](#) (Pick the recipe that works best for you today - the one below we can vouch for, however) Here also an easy to follow guide to making what is undoubtedly New York's favorite kanelbulle: [... a day with a certified master of the cinnamon bun!](#)

Kanelbullar:

Yield: 40 cinnamon rolls

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups melted butter plus 1/3 cup melted butter for filling
- 1 cup sugar for dough plus 2/3 cup sugar for filling
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. freshly ground cardamom (from about 25 cardamom pods)
- 2 pkg. dry active yeast (4 1/2 tsp.)
- 8-9 cups all purpose or bread flour
- 2 Tbsp. cinnamon
- 1 egg plus 2 Tbsp. water, lightly beaten together into an egg wash
- pearl sugar

Instruction:

Heat milk to a light boil, turning off heat when it reaches the scalding point (with small bubbles across the top). Stir in melted butter, sugar, salt, and ground cardamom.

Let mixture cool until "finger-warm" (still quite warm, but just cool enough to touch). Stir in yeast and let sit for 10 minutes.

Add flour into mixture 1/2 cup at a time until dough is firm and pulls away from the side of your mixing bowl

(Tip: If using a stand mixer, exchange the mixing paddle for the dough hook after you've added the first 5 cups of flour. Use the dough hook to mix and knead the dough as you add the remaining 3-4 cups of flour). Cover the dough in the mixing bowl with a clean towel and let rise until doubled, about an hour.

Punch down the dough, then remove from bowl.

On a floured counter, knead dough lightly until smooth and shiny. Divide dough into two halves. Roll each half of dough into a 12" by 18" rectangle. Brush each rectangle well with melted butter.

Combine 2/3 cup sugar and 2 Tbsp. cinnamon; sprinkle evenly over the 2 rectangles.

Roll each rectangle crosswise, like a jelly roll, to form an 18"-long cylinder. Using a sharp or serrated knife, cut each cylinder into 20 equal slices. Place each slice into a paper cupcake wrapper and place on baking sheet. Cover with towel and allow to double in size, about 45 minutes. Preheat oven to 425°. Brush risen cinnamon rolls with egg wash and sprinkle with pearl sugar. Place in the middle of a preheated oven and bake for 7 minutes, or until done. Yield: 40 cinnamon roll.

OLE WAS driving a wagonload of wheat to town when a wheel was caught in the ditch and overturned. Sven saw it and came out to inspect a little.

"Hey, Ole," he called out. "I'll help you turn the wagon back over and fill it up again. But I'm about to eat dinner. Why don't you come and have dinner with me? Then we'll go to work."

"Thank you, Sven," Ole answered, "but I don't think Lena would like me to."

"Oh, come on!" Sven insisted.

"OK," Ole finally agreed, "but Lena won't like it."

After a hearty dinner, Ole thanked his host. "I feel a lot better now, but I know Lena's going to be upset," he said.

"Don't worry so much," said Sven. "By the way, where is she?"

"Under the wagon," said Ole.

A few important days ...

October 14: 'The Day of the shrimp sandwich'. Are you 'gliding along on a shrimp sandwich?'



Tomatoes, cucumber, even a little bit of bleak roe can be used to garnish the delicious shrimp sandwich.



October 14 In Swedish History

2009: "Räkmackans dag" (the day of the shrimp sandwich) is launched at Arlanda Airport. Today the day is also celebrated at Landvetter Airport in Göteborg.

What's important with a Swedish "räkmacka"? Well, the mayonnaise, no doubt, but most of all it has to be topped by a heap of fresh shrimp. In Sweden, the shrimp sandwich is connected to traveling, mostly traveling by sea obviously. It has always been offered onboard ferries. It was in the late 19th century that the first sandwich with "fresh shrimp from the fjords" was born in Denmark, and it is thought the delicacy came to Sweden via the ferries running between Denmark and Sweden. Later on, the sandwich made it to the airports. We have earlier reported that the popular west coast shrimp seems to be in trouble: [Red listed: The West Coast shrimp among the endangered species](#)

There's also a saying in Sweden: "Glida runt på en räkmacka", translated to: "gliding along on a shrimp sandwich", which is another way of saying you have an easy life. Says Swedish archivist, trade historian, writer and TV personality Edward Blom: "At first it meant someone had it too easy. Later on it has come to mean you manage to get by without really deserving to." Blom continues to explain that the "räkmacka" was the most luxurious item at the local café, and that it thus has become a symbol for the good life.

Open-faced sandwiches and shrimp go well together. You have heard of the traditional [Toast Skagen](#) (Recipe! ..a favorite of Swedish master painter Anders Zorn). Here, a slightly more exotic take on Skagen: ['Skagen Mix' on lobster](#) -- all recipes at one point or another included in [Nordstjernen](#), America's favorite Swedish newspaper.

Why not celebrate "räkmackans dag" at your own home? We found a traditional Danish recipe that serves two.

Ingredients:

2 slices French loaf bread, ½ inch thick
lightly salted European-style butter
2 large Boston lettuce or Romaine leaves
6 ounces bay or small baby shrimp
4 Tablespoons crème fraîche or Greek-style yoghurt (although we would definitely use mayonnaise. Some say Hellman's works even better than the Swedish/Scandinavian variety, less vinegar.)
salt
freshly ground pepper
dill sprigs
lemon wedges

Instructions

Spread each bread slice with butter. Cover with a lettuce leaf. Arrange shrimp in rows on lettuce. Spoon 1 to 2 tablespoons crème fraîche or yogurt (or mayo) over shrimp. Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Garnish with dill sprigs and serve with a lemon wedge.
Recipe courtesy of Lynda Balslev for NPR.



A quick detour to Sweden

A couple Danes who were recently kayaking in Blekinge's archipelago in southern Sweden were in for a big surprise when a dolphin and her calf followed them for four kilometers all the way to Järnaviks port. Bottlenose dolphins prefer warmer ocean waters, but due to rising water temperatures, they are occasionally sighted in traditionally colder areas. The spectacular experience was filmed by the kayakers. "It's quite difficult to catch them in the picture because they would prefer to be in front of the kayaks, so it's only few times I catch them," wrote Frede Jensen. Research Director Mats Amundin of Kolmårdens Wildlife Center in Stockholm guesses these dolphins may have followed a school of fish and will likely find their way to the Baltic Sea again.