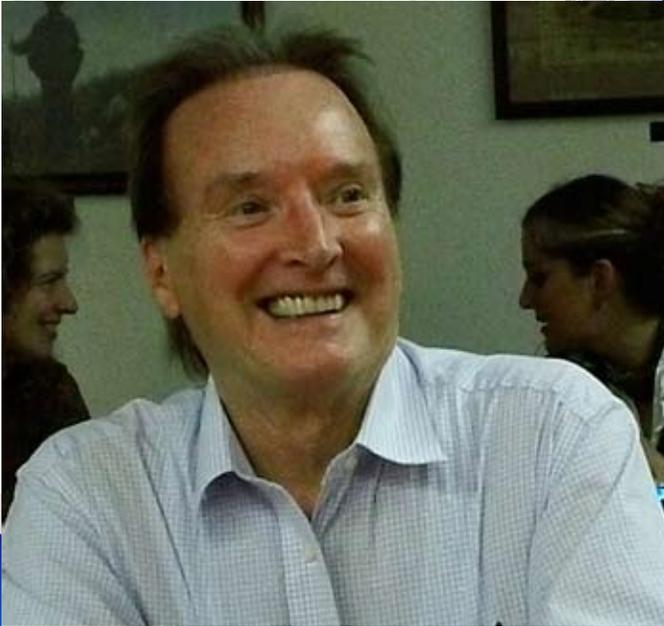


Golden Valley Lodge #616 Newsletter

Chairman's Message



The countdown has begun – how many shopping days do we have before Christmas? At GVL we count the days before our two main events in December - first the business meeting with a potluck dinner on Thursday the 13th and then the traditional Christmas party on Saturday the 15th. Last year's potluck food was fantastic and I'm sure it will be equally great this year. Please contact Maidie Karling, at (818) 787-6476 to find out what kind of food she wants you to bring.

Speaking of fantastic food – how did you like the turkey dinner at our November meeting? Our thanks go to Steve & Andrea Tabanelli and their team, which included Birgitta Clark and Britt Potter. We had the best turn-out ever at a regular meeting – I counted to 76 but might have missed a few hard-working people in the kitchen. Among those attending I noticed Elvine Lundberg, age 101, and little Iulian who won't reach that age until 2109 (97 years from

now). As you all know, Elvine is the mother of Isabella Muscarella and Iulian is the son of Stefan and Nuria Lundberg. Elvine and Iulian happen to have the same last name but they aren't related.

At our latest meeting we decided on a donation of \$12,000 to be split equally among four deserving charities. They are: Operation Home Front in Southern California, Church of Sweden in San Pedro, San Fernando Food Bank and Salvation Army of Southern California. Nine scholarship awards, totaling \$14,000, were also announced. They will be presented at our regular meeting on December 13 by Hubert Pitters, our Scholarship Committee chairman.

We also made the decision to install next year's officers at a joint ceremony for all the Lodges of our District. The ceremony will be held on January 13 at the Skandia Lodge in Pasadena. This means that we'll postpone election of the new GVL board until our regular meeting on January 10. Gunilla Thelin, Nominations Committee

Dates to Remember

- GVL Meeting.....**Thursday, Dec. 13
Potluck dinner!
- Saint Lucia Day.....**Thursday, Dec. 13
- GVL Christmas Party.....**Dec. 15
- Christmas Eve.....**Dec. 24
- Christmas Day.....**Dec. 25
- Boxing Day (2nd Xmas Day).....**Dec. 26
(Celebrated in Scandinavian countries)
- New Year's Eve.....**Dec. 31

chairman, presented the following list of prospective officers. Chairman: Frank Muscarella, Vice Chairman: Hubert Pitters, Secretary: Inga Francis, Assistant Secretary: Ruzenka di Benedetto, Financial Secretary: Delphine Trowbridge, Treasurer: Gertie Lingstrom, Chaplain: Andrea Tabanelli, Master of Ceremonies: Steve Tabanelli, Assistant Master of Ceremonies: Birgitta Clark, Historian: Laurie Taylor, Inner Guard: Johnny Bell and Outer Guard: Nicolette Taylor.



Photo Credit: Helena Wahlmann/Imagebank.se

I spoke with Marie Mickelson on the phone today. She reported that reservations for our Christmas party had reached the limit, which was set to 96. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Christmas party on December 15 and at the regular meeting with potluck on December 13.

In truth and unity,

Bertil

Fun Fact: Shortest Place-Name in the World

The other day I had the television on and heard Sweden mentioned. They named the shortest place-name in the world as Å. When I checked into it on the Internet, I found that there are a few other places named Å as well and some places such as Ö and Y that can make the same claim - but are not the popular choice. There are also at least 12 other places in Sweden called Å, but most of them are only a farm or a few houses.



Å, which means stream or small river, is a small village and a parish in Norrköping Municipality, Östergötland County, Sweden. They have a population of about 200 people. Å is pronounced "Aw".

Many tourists have visited the village just to take pictures or steal their town sign.

The parish of Å is rich in ancient remains and the oldest date all the way back the Stone Age.

Happy December Birthday!

Laila Jensen
Donald Bruget
Jonas Fornander
Cecilia Thelin McTague
Carol Mendelson
Robert Holstein
Hubert Pitters
Robert Heinstedt
Gunilla Lingstrom-Polutanovich

December 5
December 9
December 8
December 14
December 15
December 25
December 27
December 28
December 29



GVL Happenings



Thanksgiving centerpiece Steve and Andrea Tabanelli

Buffet Buzz

We enjoyed a *delicious* Thanksgiving dinner due to the excellent efforts of Andrea and Steve Tabanelli.

The terrific tablesettings even included a bottle of wine! Maybe this should be a new Thanksgiving tradition? Many thanks to you and your crew!

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Cultural Event

Thanks go out to Ann and Linnea Heinstdedt! We had a good time making traditional Scandinavian decorations for our Christmas tree and the party December 15.

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2013 Culture and Refreshments

Maidie Karling has the **2013 Culture and Refreshments** sign-up sheet. At the last meeting we counted nine openings for Culture and six for the Refreshments Committee.

Contact Maidiemouse@sbcglobal.net or telephone her at (818) 787-6476 if you would like to sign up for something!

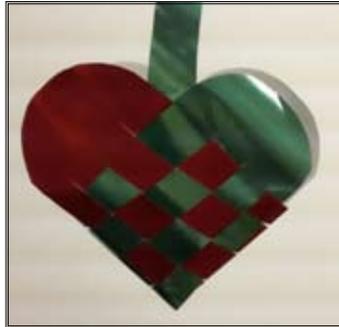
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Flower March and More

The November Flower March brought in \$54 for our fund.

- 1st Prize \$34 - Isabella Muscarella
- 2nd Prize \$21 - Isabella Muscarella
- 3rd Prize \$14 - Hubert Pitters
- Capsule Drawing \$25

Due to her lucky streak (that could rub off on you), I believe Isabella is currently accepting offers for trips to Las Vegas!



Cultural Corner

The Legend of Lucia

The legend of Lucia is that she was a beautiful Christian woman from a wealthy family. She lived in Syracuse, Italy, during the emperor Diocletian's hunt of Christians in the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Lucia's mother became very ill and Lucia cared for her and prayed for her health. When her mother miraculously recovered, Lucia decided to live as a virgin and to give away all her belongings to the poor, including her future dowry. This made her fiancé very angry, and he brought her to court and accused her of being a Christian.

Lucia was heartbroken and with a needle she tried to blind herself. But a miracle happened and she could see, even though her eyes were destroyed. This is the reason why Lucia is often portrayed holding two eyes on a tray.

The judge sentenced her to leave the city, but she refused. The story goes that even though a 1000 men, oxen and trolls tried to drag her out, they could not move her. When that didn't work, they covered her in tar and set fire to her. The flames twisted and turned in agony, but Lucia was not harmed - not even her red dress. One of the versions of the legend names her former fiancé as the one who stuck the sword in her neck which ended her life on December 13th, A.D.304.

Lucia was later declared a saint by the church and given the name of Saint Lucia. She is still honored in Sicily, where she was born. Christians there gather to celebrate her day with bonfires and torchlight parades.

Popular Belief of Lucia in Sweden

Lucia means 'light'. Until around year 1700, the night between the 12th and the 13th was considered the longest of the year in Sweden. At this time, Sweden was a Catholic country and because Lucia died on the 13th, she became a symbol of light to the sun-starved people of the North. They imagined Lucia as a shining figure crowned by a radiant halo, or even with wings just like an angel.

This long night was thought to be very dangerous.

People believed that all kinds of ghosts and spirits came to life, and even that the animals talked to each other in their stables. In some areas, people were afraid to go outside at all. It became a sport to be the first one to get up in the morning, or at least to avoid being the last one. The last person to get up was called 'lussegubben'. It was popular to dress up in scary and funny costumes, and the funniest costume of them all was when the males dressed up like brides.

Since they all got up early and the night was long, they liked to eat -- a lot. Some even ate three breakfasts. The breakfast usually consisted of coffee, 'lussekatter' (Lucia cats, or Saffron buns) and gingerbread.

Around the year 750 these customs spread from the farmers in Västergötland (a province in the south part of Sweden) to the universities in the cities. The students dressed up in nightgowns and went to their teachers' houses bringing coffee and 'lussekatter' and sang for them.

The Modern Celebration of Lucia

The first public Lucia procession was arranged by a Swedish newspaper, *Stockholms Dagblad*, in 1927. Lucia celebrations started spreading rapidly after that including the Swedish speaking parts of Finland and to most other parts of the world where there are Swedes.

Lucia wears a white gown, a red ribbon around her waist and a crown of greens (often leaves of lingonberry) on her head. Five, seven, or even nine white candles are set into her crown. For safety reasons, when children dress as Lucia they use a crown with battery lights instead of lit candles.

Now boys take part in the procession as well, playing different roles associated with Christmas. Some may be dressed in the same kind of white robe, but with a cone-shaped hat decorated with golden stars, called "stjärngossar" (star boys); some may be dressed up as "tomtenissar", carrying lanterns; and some may be dressed up as gingerbread men. They participate in the singing and also have a song or two of their own.

Continued on page 5

Lucia (Continued from page 4)

Every year a Lucia of Sweden is elected. One of her tasks is to visit Syracuse and take part in their annual religious procession. Together with her 'tärnor' and 'stjärngossar' she also does a lot of charity work during the year. For example she would visit shopping centers, sing at homes for elderly people, collect money for the poor all over the world and hand out pepparkakor (clove-cinnamon-ginger cookies.)

Although St. Lucia's Day is not an official holiday in Sweden, it is a popular occasion in Sweden and is still celebrated on December the 13th. The evening and night before (so called "Lusse-vigil") The Lucia Day

is a notoriously noisy time. High school students often celebrate by partying all through the night. At many universities, students hold big formal dinner parties since this is the last chance to celebrate together before most students go home to their families for Christmas.

On the morning of December 13th, all over Sweden children get up early, dress up in the white gown, with the crown of lights, and surprise their parents in bed with coffee, 'lussekatter' and gingerbread on a tray. This celebration also takes place in schools, companies, hospitals, and just about everywhere!

Sources: Internet sites Wikipedia & Graphic Garden

Saffron (Lucia) Buns



Photo Credit: Helena Wahlmann/Imagebank.se

2 1/8 cups milk
1/2 cup butter
3 (0.6 ounce) cakes compressed fresh yeast
8 ounces sour cream
2 (.5 gram) packets powdered saffron
2/3 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
7 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup raisins (optional)
1 egg, beaten

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat the milk and butter in a small saucepan until the butter has melted and the temperature has reached 100 degrees. Crumble the yeast into a bowl, then pour in the warm milk. Stir well until the yeast dissolves.
2. Stir in the sour cream, saffron, sugar, salt, and 7 cups of the flour. Mix the dough in the bowl until it becomes shiny and silky, adding more flour as needed until it begins to come away from the sides of the bowl. Cover and let rise for 40 minutes.
3. Prepare 2 or 3 baking sheets by covering each with a sheet of parchment paper. Lightly flour a work surface, punch down the dough, then divide into 35 pieces. Roll each piece into a rope, 5 to 6 inches long. With the rope lying flat on the work surface, roll each end towards the center, in opposite directions, creating a curled S-shape. Place the buns on the prepared baking sheets, and garnish with raisins if desired. Cover with a towel, and allow to rise for an additional 30 minutes while you preheat oven to 425 degrees.
4. Gently brush each bun with beaten egg, then bake in the oven until puffed and golden about 5 to 10 minutes. Enjoy!

Baby News!

Britt Potter is very proud to announce the birth of her beautiful new grandbaby, Audra Grace Potter. Audra was born November 20, 2012. She came a month early, so she is very tiny. Audra's happy parents are Stacy and Andy (Britt's son).



Some Smiles for Christmas

What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day.

Phyllis Diller

I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying, toys not included.

Bernard Manning

That awkward moment when Santa has the same wrapping paper as your mom.

Unknown

Christmas is the season when you buy this year's gifts with next year's money.

Unknown

Youth Central

Youth Group Update

Tell your kids to check out our facebook page. (You can click on the icon above.) Ruzenka announced the next activity will probably be **bowling**. More information will be at the facebook page.

If your child is 14, or even *close* to turning 14, have them visit our next meeting with you. We have a special table for our youth to introduce them to the other youth in our lodge!

Our Bartender is Stepping Down



Many thanks to our wonderful bartender, Lage Engblom for keeping our bar well-stocked and graciously serving us at our meetings for several years. He deserves a toast! Skål!





**Golden Valley Lodge #616
14312 Friar Street
Van Nuys, CA 91401**

