

January 2013

# Golden Valley Lodge #616

# Newsletter

## Chairman's Message



This is my last chairman's message in the GVL newsletter. Those of you who attended the December meeting know that we elected our officers for 2013. The new board assumes office at the installation ceremony to be held at a District meeting in Pasadena on January 13. Our list of

elected officers is identical to the one presented by the Nominating Committee and described in my *Chairman's Message* last month. Frank Muscarella is our newly elected Chairman and Hubert Pitters will serve as the Vice Chairman.

I would like to thank all who helped out and/or donated items to be raffled at the Christmas party. The entire event was a great success thanks to hard work by many people. Sonja Andonian and Kerstin Wendt were in charge of the organizing committee. They hired two of our members, Gertie Lindstrom and Annette Richards, to provide the dinner. People were raving about the food – it was fantastic, cooked just the way they remembered from the old country. Marie Mickelson tells me that 97 people had pre-registered – 48 members, 26 non-members and 23 children of age 15 or younger. The evening's entertainment included a Lucia ceremony with a talented group of youngsters coached by Dorothy Burns and, of course, a visit by Santa. Another highlight was a solo performance by Inga Francis who sang the Swedish version of *O Holy Night*.



## Dates to Remember

**Golden Valley Lodge Meeting... Thursday, Jan. 10**  
**Joint installation of Local Lodge Officers at**  
**Skandia Lodge ..... Sunday, January 13**  
Information submissions to [laurietaylor@hotmail.com](mailto:laurietaylor@hotmail.com)

A few days before Christmas I received a check for \$10,000 and a letter from Les & Carol Mendelson explaining that they wished to donate the money to our Lodge in memory of Carol's parents. Carol is a long-time member of GVL as were her parents, Edward & Alma Nelson, who are remembered for their many years of contributions and dedication to our Lodge. In the letter Mr. Mendelson specified that at least half of the amount should go to the GVL Scholarship Program and the remainder should be spent on our youth activities program and wherever else we find a need.

On a different note, it is my sad duty to inform you that Lilly Nelson passed away during the holidays at the age of 94. She was a charter member – that is, she joined the group of people who started our Lodge on December 8, 1946.

As most of you know, Golden Valley Lodge was named a beneficiary in the last will of Ms. Bertha Kalm who passed away on April 11, 2012. Although not a member of any Vasa Lodge she had on several occasions donated money to the GVL Scholarship Program. A few days ago I got a phone call from our former chairman, Gunilla Thelin, who acts as executor of the estate. She was in the process of mailing out checks to all five of the organizations that were named in the will. Each check is for \$250,000. Gunilla explained that it is a partial payment - the remaining (small) portion will be distributed when all the expenses of the estate become

known. The Golden Valley Lodge will use the money for scholarship awards as directed by our benefactor.

Now when my term in office is coming to an end, I can report that our Lodge is in great shape from a financial point of view but I am concerned about the demographics. The chart shown on the next page illustrates the skewed age distribution of our membership. Even though we have seen some improvement in recent years we need to do a better job of recruiting younger generations to participate in Lodge activities and committees. During the three years that I have served as your chairman, GVL welcomed 33 new members (including two older members who were reinstated). In the same time period we lost 32 members - 7 passed away but most of them (25) resigned or were dropped for non-payment of dues.

Of the 27 members who were initiated during the two-year period from November 2007 to November 2009, nearly one half (most of them in their 30s and 40s) quit GVL within three years. Our Lodge may soon become a club for the geriatric crowd (I include myself in that group). What can the new board do to avoid this fate? If asked, my advice would be: *“Stay open to new ideas, sponsor youth activities and, most importantly, eliminate or curtail entrenched power structures”*. Even with these changes, things aren't going to improve overnight - it's a gradual process but, as the saying goes, every journey starts with a first step.



Of the 27 members who were initiated during the two-year period from November 2007 to November 2009, nearly one half (most of them in their 30s and 40s) quit GVL within three years. Our Lodge may soon become a club for the geriatric crowd (I include myself in that group). What can the new board do to avoid this fate? If asked, my advice would be: *“Stay open to new ideas, sponsor youth activities and, most importantly, eliminate or curtail entrenched power structures”*. Even with these changes, things aren't going to improve overnight - it's a gradual process but, as the saying goes, every journey starts with a first step.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow officers. My thanks also go to several other Lodge members who helped in so many ways. I credit them with any success I've had as your chairman. Failures I attribute to my own poor skills in communicating and presenting ideas effectively.

I hope to see you all at the lodge on Thursday, January 10.

In truth and unity,

Bertil



# GVL Happenings

## Buffet Buzz

Last month was the potluck dinner. It was an excellent meal!

### Hyttisill & music at next Golden Valley Lodge meeting.

Delphine and Dorothy are planning an evening of traditional Småland food and entertainment. It's a very old tradition in the Kingdom of Crystal which goes back to the times when the glassworks was the meeting place in the village. In the evenings, the visitors were invited to enjoy traditional food prepared in the furnaces where the glass has been left over night to slowly cool down. There was also musical entertainment and a glass blowing show on master level. We won't be doing any glass blowing, of course, but we do plan to do some glass 'lifting' as there will be Akvavit on hand for some New Year's toasts and some traditional Swedish music performed by our troubadour, Rolf Gustafsson.

### Flower March and Lottery Winner

Our flower march brought in \$48.75 this month. Congratulations to our capsule winner, Ann Heinstedt!

- 1st prize: \$20 to Inga Francis
- 2nd prize: \$15 to Maidie Karling
- 3rd prize: \$10 to Isabella Muscarella



## Happy January Birthday to You!



Mary-Jean Wilson	Jan. 2	Rigmor Jonsdotter	Jan. 9
Isabella Muscarella	Jan. 3	Amir Hamaoui	Jan. 11
Odd Reiersen	Jan. 5	Jason Trowbridge	Jan. 11
Aina Selinder	Jan. 5	Elizabeth Eacott	Jan. 12
Birgitta Clark	Jan. 5	Kamil Hamaoui	Jan. 18
Margit Bennett	Jan. 6	Karl Brink	Jan. 23
Eva Brown	Jan. 7	Ruzenka di Benedetto	
Kristina DeHart	Jan. 7		Jan. 28
Dagmar Rydberg	Jan. 8	Gunhild De Paoli	Jan. 30
Brita Anderson-Brink	Jan. 8		

Hopefully, no one was left off!



This cute little guy lights up my garden path at night. I would venture to guess that most of you have at least one tomte (or a dozen) around your homes, too? I have loved tomtegubbes ever since I can remember. Along with Santa, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny, we have a tomte looking out for us. Apparently, tomtes can be mischevius as well. When my kids were little, they would explain that their room got messy because of “the little guy with the white whiskers.”

For those of you who don't yet know they have a tomte, or just want to learn more, here is a little history from the Internet about this Scandinavian character.

A tomte, nisse or tomtenisse (Sweden), nisse (Norway and Denmark) or tonttu (Finland) is a humanoid mythical creature of Scandinavian folklore. The tomte or nisse was believed to take care of a farmer's home and family. He protects them from misfortune, particularly at night. The Swedish name tomte is derived from a place of residence and area of influence: the house lot or tomt. Tomte literally means “homestead man” and is derived from the word tomt which means homestead or building lot. Nisse is derived from the name Nils which is the Scandinavian form of Nicholas.

A nisse considers porridge his due and is greedy for butter. The legend *When the Nisse Got No Butter on His Christmas Porridge* illustrates the consequences of tampering with his porridge. The legend goes that one Christmas Eve a servant girl decided she would play a trick on the nisse. She hid the butter for his gröt at the bottom of the bowl. When the nisse saw there was no butter on his Christmas porridge, he went to the shed and killed the best cow. He wanted to show them he did not appreciate them begrudging him a little bit of butter. He returned to the barn to eat the porridge anyway. When he discovered the butter at the bottom of the bowl, he felt so bad that he walked to the neighbor's farm, took their best cow, and led her back to the stall of the cow he had killed.



Malene Thyssen, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Malene>

Article Sources: Wikipedia and [ingebretsens.com](http://ingebretsens.com)

According to legend, domestic spirits often steal from a neighbor to increase the prosperity of the farm where they make their home. This is demonstrated in the legend *The Nisse Who Stole Fodder*.

In this legend, there once was a farmer who had no hay left for his farm animals. He sat one day and complained about it when he heard a voice say, “I will help you.” The farmer looked around but couldn't

find where the voice came from. After a few days he noticed his animals were thriving and healthy even though they had no food. One day the farmer decided he would take his chances and cross the ice to a neighboring village to buy some hay. When he was in the middle of the ice, a small man appeared and asked where he was going. The farmer replied that he was going to buy hay. The little man said not to worry because he would help him, so the farmer returned home. One night the farmer noticed by moonlight a little man leading one of his cows across the ice to a neighbor's farm. When they returned the cow was loaded down with hay. Then the farmer realized the little man was a nisse and he had been fetching hay for the animals.

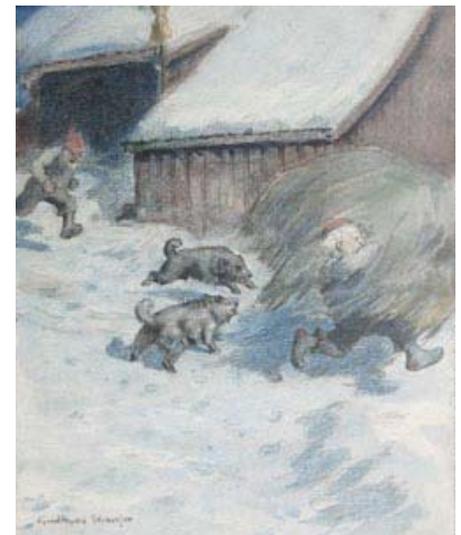
The modern day version of the julenisse is very different from the legends of the domestic tomte or nisse. The julenisse is portrayed as an older, good natured, adult-sized man (*coincidentally* the size of an uncle or father - tee hee) with a long white beard and a red hat and suit. He carries a sack of toys on his back, visits children in their homes on Christmas Eve and always asks, “Are there any good children here?” (Norwegian). Many Scandinavian children also believe he lives at the North Pole where he has a workshop.

The Norwegian julenisse is very much like the American Santa Claus and is based upon the German legend of St. Nicholas who was the patron saint of children and seamen. He was known for his many kind acts toward children.

In Sweden, the jultomte is accompanied by the Christmas goat who pulls his sleigh as he delivers gifts to the children's homes. In pagan times, the god Thor was believed to ride across the sky in a chariot pulled by two goats. Christians adopted the goat as a Christmas symbol. The chained figure of a buck is a representation of Lucifer who was conquered by the good Saint Nicholas and is destined to accompany his master on his journey to distribute gifts to the children. Today the goat is a benign straw figure but still a very well-known Swedish Christmas symbol.

Legends of the domestic nisse and tomte meet the modern day version of the julenisse or jultomte in the tradition of leaving a bowl of julegröt with butter out in the barn or in the house for them on Christmas Eve. This tradition is still practiced in Scandinavian homes.

Next month I would like to put in pictures of lodge member's tomtes... if you have been lucky enough to snap a picture! Please email pictures to [laurietaylor@hotmail.com](mailto:laurietaylor@hotmail.com)



Gudmund Stenersen (1863-1934), of a Nisse stealing hay from a farmer.



# Lucia Program 2012



Lucia Photo Credit: Nuria Basañez

# Christmas Party 2012











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

