



VOLUME XLI
NOVEMBER 2017

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2017 Event Schedule

Date and Time	Event	Location
12/3/17 from 2 to 4 pm	Practice for Lucia	Gethsemane Lutheran Church
12/9/17 from 7-9	Lucia	Gethsemane Lutheran Church

On Saturday, October 21, a warm Indian Summer evening, we met at Spindletop for the Fall Harvest Dinner. We gathered to visit at 6:30, and dinner was served at 7 pm. The menu turned out to be a surprise, but everyone seemed to enjoy it! We might have to try that again! We were fortunate to have Liang Luo and her daughter, Ingrid, join us. Liang, a PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Modern and Classical languages at the University of Kentucky, married to a Swede, Per Cassel, who is professor at the University of Michigan. Liang spoke on A Chinese Perspective on Sweden. While the United States had little contact with China, Sweden had cultural exchanges that enriched both countries. Since 1957, there have been 8 Chinese winners of Nobel prizes, 4 in Physics, 1 in Physiology or Medicine, 2 in Literature and 1 in Peace. It was a very interesting talk, and we hope to see Liang, and Per and Ingrid at the Luciafest!

Did you happen to see the list of winners of the women's division of the New York City Marathon in the New York Times on Monday, November 6, 2017? Kristen Lenning shared it with me, and in the early days, Norwegian Grete Waitz won it in 1978, 1979 and 1980, as well as in 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1988. Another Norwegian, Ingrid Kristiansen won it in 1989! The United States American women won the first 6 times, and then it took 40 years to win again.

By the way, on December 8, 2017, the Lucia fest rehearsal will take place from 3 to 5 pm at Gethsemane Lutheran Church. Everyone who would like to participate in the program is welcome. We will assign the readings, practice the carols, along with the procession and recession, hand out the costumes, and have a little celebration of our own. On Saturday, December 9, there will be a dress rehearsal from 5-6 pm, with time left to get ready for the program at 7 pm. Everyone is invited to bring a favorite Nordic dish to share with others. We will also have cider and glogg. If a couple of people are available to come a little early on Saturday to help set up tables and do a little decorating, that would be wonderful. We can also use a bit of help at the end of the evening to leave everything shipshape. Tusen Tack!

You might be interested to know that Goteland has an amazing number of treasure troves from Viking days. The island is about 50 miles east of southern Sweden, and was a crossroads for travelers. Swedish Vikings mostly went east down the great rivers of Russia to the Middle East. It was a perilous journey, not just because of the physical challenges, including many portages of ships and their contents, but also because the settlers along the way were not always pleased to see the Vikings! Pirates also lurked along the way. Yet somehow the Vikings managed to accumulate huge piles of silver coins, 180,000 in Goteland so far, compared to 80,000 in the rest of Sweden. It's impressive given that Goteland is about 1-2 percent of the size of Sweden! Interesting to note, the Vikings only wanted coins that were about 95% pure silver. (Perhaps John Paulsen can explain to us how they measured that! Could you identify by color and consistency with that precision?) Once the coins in the Middle East declined in degree of silver content, the Vikings no longer collected them, but sought them from other countries. Some they melted down to make beautiful items for household use or decorative purposes. Possibly, the treasure, which was not very well hidden, but sometimes left on graves, or borders, was placed in or on the earth as an offering to the gods. You can find out more details about these collections from Archaeology Magazine, January-February edition in 2017. The photos are amazing!

Kristen Lenning shared with me an item from the Smithsonian newsletter that also establishes links between the Vikings and the Middle East in the weaving of Arabic designs and the word for Allah in the fabrics created. There appears to be evidence of people traveling back and forth from the cultures. More on that another time!

According to The Viking, published by Crescent Press in 1975, the Vikings never called themselves by that name, and the origin is obscure. The Franks called them north men, which later became Normans. The Vikings were not only raiders, of course, but also traders and settlers, and many settled in the lands they visited as we are finding out through DNA. Gotland also has many monument stones with

Inscriptions and drawings that appear to commemorate special occasions now lost to history. The Viking uses illustrations from the picture stones at the head of each chapter and notes that many included ships filled with armed men. Why does that not surprise us!

In the interest of getting word to you promptly, I will keep this newsletter short. See you at Lucia!

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