



New Sweden Cultural Heritage Society Celebrates Valborgmässafton —April 30, 2011 at the Carter's

Dave and Melinda Carter are again hosting Valborgmässafton (Walpurgis) this year. They have a small farm in the Stafford West Linn area, can host lots of visitors and have a bonfire! There will also be snacks (including varm korv and hot drinks) served. Their address is 1470 SW Borland Road, West Linn, OR 97068 and the event will begin at 7 p.m. on April 30. This year, 2011, we have invited participation from the Finnish Community, and have invited the Scandinavian Chorus to participate with a few songs to welcome spring.

The directions to their farm: From I 205 take the Lake Oswego Stafford exit. Go north on Stafford Road (about 3 city blocks) to Wanker's corner. Turn right (east) on Borland Road. Their place is one-half mile east of Wanker's corner (on Borland where it meets Ek Road). Turn south onto a gravel road into the farm at the junction of Ek and Borland. Look for signs. Dave's phone is 503-890-6458 and in general the Carters would like to keep the traffic limited to the field and bonfire. There should be plenty of parking and an attendant to help visitors find a spot. They hope to see everyone there. Just a note: if it's raining, please bring an umbrella.

Valborgmässafton in Sweden: The 30th of April, marks the end of the winter in Sweden and Finland, and is the most important festive celebration of the year alongside of Christmas and Midsummer. Valborgmässafton is celebrated in Sweden in different ways, always depending on the part of the country. Lighting large bonfires is a popular celebration in eastern parts of Sweden like in Svealand or Uppland, where people gather material for their bonfires for months ahead. Lighting bonfires is an ancient custom related to keeping away evil spirits, demons and witches. Nowadays Valborgmässafton is just seen as a celebration of springtime, but for a feel of the good old Viking days the Skansen Open-Air museum still celebrates Stockholm's largest and most historical Valborgmässafton celebration.

For most of the Swedes though, Valborgmässafton just means the end of the winter season and there is no better way to celebrate it than singing spring songs. Spring songs and choral singing are very typical of the Swedish Valborgmässafton celebrations, with many of the traditional songs dating from as back as the 19th century. The most popular and traditional spring festivities are held in the old university towns of Uppsala, Lund and Gothenburg, with its famous carnival parade. Current and graduated students party all day and all night, and even perhaps longer than that, wearing all the time their characteristic white graduation caps. Valborgmässafton is a double national festivity in Sweden because King Carl XVI Gustaf celebrates his birthday on

Valborgmässafton day, 30th of April. Swedish flags are raised all around the country to salute him and show him respect.

Vappu in Finland*: In Finland Walpurgis day (*Vappu*) is, along with New Year's Eve and Juhannus, the biggest carnival-style festival held in the streets of Finland's towns and cities. The celebration, which begins on the evening of 30 April and continues to 1 May, typically centers on copious consumption of sparkling wine and other alcoholic beverages. Student traditions, particularly those of the engineering students, are one of the main characteristics of *Vappu*. Since the end of the 19th century, this traditional upper-class feast has been appropriated by university students. Many graduates from *lukio*, and thus traditionally assumed as university students or alumni, wear a cap. Most people think the caps of the engineering students are distinguished by pom-poms hanging from them; however, nurses and some other vocational school graduates also have caps with pom-poms. One tradition is to drink sima, a home-made mead, along with freshly cooked doughnuts.

In the capital Helsinki and its surrounding region, fixtures include the capping (on 30 April at 6 pm) of the Havis Amanda, a nude female statue in Helsinki, and the biannually alternating publications of ribald matter called *Äpy* and *Julkku*, by engineering students of Aalto University School of Science and Technology. (* excerpted from Wikipedia)