



VSA Newsletter October 28, 2006

- Events : Page 1 & 2
- Halloween Postcards Collectibles: Page 2
- An Overview of Victorian Fancy Dress : Page 2 & 3
- This Month in History: Page 4

Deborah Lundberg  
Newsletter Editor

## Check out our brand new website

<http://www.northstarvsa.com/>

### Events

#### Autumn Masque Ball

Where: Klub Haus, 1079 Rice Street, St. Paul

When: Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

Cost: \$40 per person

This will be an introduction to a full masque ball. Guests are asked to wear masks.

The Ball invitations have been sent out. If you have not received any or misplaced them, you can print out the registration form on our website

[Autumn Ball Registration](#)

The registration deadline is October 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Evening Soirée:** The next soirée will be on Friday November 3rd, at the Brown residence.

Mary Brown will be at home to callers from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Bring light munchies, if desired.

Hot tea and Lemonade will be provided, if any other beverage is desired please feel free to bring it along.

Victorian Parlor Games (or perhaps a modern one) may be part of the entertainment.

Where: 3566 Blue Jay Way #206Eagan, MN  
Phone: 651-681-9499

Directions: From I 35 E and Yankee Doodle Road, go east on Yankee Doodle to Lexington, turn south (right) going approximately 3 blocks to Duckwood, the first stop light. Turn left onto Duckwood and take the second left Blue Jay Way (Blue Jay Way is a "U" Drive, so if you turn on the first one, you will still get there). 3566 is the

second townhouse complex on the left, go to the south "common" entrance (one that's not a private entrance) and ring the buzzer.

Period attire always admired, but never required.

#### Guy Fawkes Day

“Remember, remember,  
the fifth of November,  
Gunpowder, treason and plot.  
We see no reason why  
Gunpowder treason  
Should ever we forgot!”

The Northstar Chapter is having a Guy Fawkes Day Celebration on Sunday, November 5th, 2006, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the home of Monica Mohn, 2433 Park Avenue, Minneapolis. There will be fireworks. More information will be sent out via email.

**Sewing Bees:** Due to the holidays and everyone's hectic schedule, not least of all ours, we have decided to not have any sewing bees until after the first of the year.

We will start in January having regular sewing bees on the fourth Saturday of every month. Location to be announced. Both Sarah French and Mary Brown will be happy to meet with any member who has need of sewing assistance or information about other places to get period clothing, outside of the regular sewing bee dates. They should contact Sarah French by phone, 612-929-0457 or Mary Brown by e-mail ([mebbieb10@cs.com](mailto:mebbieb10@cs.com))

**Board Meeting:** The next board meeting will be on November 16<sup>th</sup>. We do not have a place to host this meeting, anyone wishing to volunteer their

house please contact Mary Brown by e-mail ([mebbieb10@cs.com](mailto:mebbieb10@cs.com))

### 12<sup>th</sup> Night Ball:

I am excited to announce that our annual 12<sup>th</sup> Night Ball will be held on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 which really is 12th night.

Anyone wishing to serve on the ball committee for the 12th Night Ball needs to contact Kit Kusick 651-329-2237 or via e-mail at [kit@kitcusick.com](mailto:kit@kitcusick.com) or at the ball website e-mail [ball@northstarvsa.com](mailto:ball@northstarvsa.com), all are welcome to contribute.

---

## Halloween Postcard Collectibles

By Judy Curtiss

Some of the most sought after holiday collectibles are of the Halloween genre and date back to the Victorian era. Papier-mâché lanterns and candy boxes are scarce and command very high prices. Vintage mask, costumes, clickers and candy bags, although more prevalent, can also carry high price tags. One of the most varied and fun Halloween collectible is the turn of the century postcard.

During the first 15 years of the 20th century hundreds of different Halloween postcards could be found on store racks depicting now obscure superstitions and a variety of images from frightening witches, devils and goblins to cute children, jack-O-lanterns and vegetable people. Many of the cards came in series and were beautifully lithographed and often embossed or trimmed in gold. Unique cards such as hold to the light images are very rare today and command very high prices.

Illustrators such as Ellen Clapsaddle, Wunsch and Brundage all created hundreds of Halloween images during the golden age of postcards and are favorites with collectors today. Today these post cards that sold for pennies a hundred years ago can seldom be found for under \$20.00, with some images commanding prices in the hundreds of dollars.



There are a variety of Postcards available on eBay. This sepia postcard published by Gartner & Bender is currently up for auction. The sentiment reads: "Halloween is the time of year to see the things both strange & queer, But if you're lucky, you may see the one who is your destiny."

---

## An Overview of Victorian Fancy Dress

By Laura M. McBeth

It's that special season when the masses join those of us who love to play dress-up all year round. Queen Victoria also shared a fondness for fancy dress which no doubt started the phenomena of Fancy Dress balls that became very popular during the Victorian period (1837-1901).

By the early 19th century the uncontrollable behavior associated with masquerades had pushed masks out of favor. A new emphasis was placed on costume of an elevated nature, and masquerades were now Fancy Dress balls.

Fancy Dress examples from different decades:



1845



1859



1880

Both public and private fancy dress parties were held for almost any occasion: the opening of a new bridge, a civic holiday, a daughter's coming

out, a skating carnival--Fancy Dress was the theme of choice!

“Almost any notable figure in history and literature was likely to spur the imaginations of fancy dress party guests. While characters from literature, especially the Shakespearean plays, remained popular choices for fancy dress parties throughout much of the century; a quest for increasingly unique and creative costumes began to appear,” writes Ian Wide of <http://www.fancy-dress-wear.co.uk>.

It was also Queen Victoria’s interest in history that fueled the popularity of historical characters and themes, which lasted throughout the century. Historic costumes were thought to be in better taste than humorous or exotic ones. Literary characters were also popular, and though the Victorians favored characters from the 18th century, costumes from Shakespeare, Dickens, and Tennyson made appearances. Historical accuracy was important when depicting historical characters however, most fancy dresses followed contemporary styles more than those from the past.

Here are few examples:



Anne Boleyn



Marie Antoinette

Some costumes were elaborate and made for specific occasions, but many fancy dresses were simply evening gowns adorned with flowers, stars, or other ornaments to create the costume then given an exalted name. For example, the Night costume, one of the most popular characters

(and admittedly a personal favorite of mine), could easily be achieved by decorating a dark blue or black dress with stars and wearing a crescent moon headpiece. Similar popular symbolic characters that may be easily created are Summer, The Last Rose of Summer, Autumn, Harvest, Winter, Snow, and Spring.



One of the most popular items of clothing for Fancy Dress was the Italian domino; a voluminous cloak often hooded and made of silk. When fastened, a domino completely covered the wearer to the ankles, hiding whatever might be worn underneath. Men would often choose to wear their regular evening clothes to a Fancy dress party and simply cover them with a domino as a gesture towards fancy dress. The most common colors for dominos were red or black for men and white, red, or blue for ladies. Ladies would often have their dominos made to match the costume underneath, although by the mid nineteenth century, the domino started to fall out of favor.

Fancy dress parties were a Victorian favorite and it’s wonderful that as a group we will experience a great event, and enjoy ourselves as the Victorians would have. Now that you’re more familiar with fancy dress, see you at the ball!

---

## This Month in History

By Laura M. McBeth

On October 28th, 1886 the Statue of Liberty was inaugurated, President Grover Cleveland (our 22nd & 24th President) accepted the Statue on behalf of the United States.

The 152 foot statue was gift to the United States from the people of France to honor the friendship established during the American Revolution.

The idea of the statue was conceived in 1865, and intended to be a gift for the American Centennial. Construction didn't begin until 1875 and was completed in 1884. On July 4th 1884 the statue was presented to America.

Structural engineer Gustave Eiffel worked with Sculptor Frederic-Auguste Barholdi to design the Statue of Liberty.

Barholdi incorporated many symbolic features in his colossus. There are 25 windows in the crown representing gemstones found on the earth and the heaven's rays shining over the world. The seven rays of the Statue's crown represent the seven seas and continents of the world. The tablet, which represents the book of law, the Statue holds in her left hand reads "JULY IV MDCCLXXVI" (July 4th, 1776) the date of American Independence. The torch is a symbol of enlightenment. Finally at the Statue's feet lie chains and a broken shackle; these symbolize the Statue as a goddess free from oppression and servitude.

---

