

The Little Mermaid



A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHWEST DANISH ASSOCIATION

Jan Feb Mar 2023 Issue #2022/2023 Volume 3

Reflections on My Time at Askov Højskole

By Sandra Pedersen

I finished my stay at Askov Højskole and as I enter a new year and soon a new højskole, I find myself reflecting on what I've learned over the past few months.

Moving to another country and trying to find my place in a culture I hadn't grown up with required a lot of growing on my part.

I was afraid to move to Denmark, I really was. When I was younger the last thing I wanted to do was build my future here.

My 14-year-old mind palace was furnished with worries about how hard it would be to start from scratch. And it was hard, but not in a negative way. Since moving, I have been challenged to develop my skills in a new language, take up winter bathing, and foster connections with different communities I had never encountered before.

Although all this newness was at times intimidating, I've realized through my time here that I can't really beat fear, that it will always be a part of my life in one form or another. So I resolved to do it scared, to take the uncertain step. Not in spite of my anxious hesitations, but with them. Together my fear and I walked hand in hand through many unknown doors, afraid but ready.

And I'm grateful I accepted the challenges and uncomfortable emotions that came with living 4,696 miles away. Because they helped me have a sense of trust in myself and my abilities. A trust I never thought I could have. But now I'm able to look back at all that fear and find myself unscathed. I now navigate through the world with faith in myself and have curiosity for scary things.

For the rest of my life, I'm sure I will visit Askov again and again, both physically and mentally. The lessons I've learned will follow me and I have many højskole friends I hope to keep in my life. I'm certain memory will also often tap its phantom finger on



Image: Sandra Pedersen and classmate from Askov Højskole

Continued on page 7

In this issue

2....President's Corner

3....Danish Christmas in the Northwest

4....Return of the Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner

5....Young Anderson Playing with Prince Frits

6....Zooming Into Christmas: Lillejuleaften on Zoom

7....Reflections on My Time at Askov Højskole

9....Calendar

10....Donations

12.... Backpage



Northwest Danish Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing with others our Danish culture, traditions, and values.

President's Corner



One Hundred Years this August Let's Create a Hundred Year Endowment

By Edith E. Christensen, EdD, NWDA President

This is the one-hundredth year of Northwest Danish Association. It was founded as the Northwest Danish Old Peoples Home on August 18, 1923. We will celebrate one-hundred years the week of August 13 to 19th, 2023. If you are willing to help with this in some way, large or small, please call Edith or Emily in the office at 206-523-3263 or email seattle@nwdanish.org and emily@nwdanish.org. We would love to hear your ideas and offers of help. We can't do this alone from the office. It should be exciting to plan for this special event ---100 years!!

This past couple of months we completed our auction again on-line. This has been quite successful but not as personal as the in-house attended auctions and program. It was another successful auction on-line that raised over \$10,000.

We are thankful for the many who have helped with providing funding donations this past year for the NWDA. Your donations help us continue our Danish Association programs even if it is in a different way. The Danish American Cultural Retreat held on-line, but usually held at Menucha, was again a success with many fantastic speakers. We are working on having another Retreat, but for now the date is still

being considered and the place has not yet been determined. We could use some help in planning and finding speakers. Please let us know if you have some ideas. Call or email the office to offer what you can in ideas and time. We are hoping to have some events held in a space for the camaraderie of people.

In looking at the future of NWDA we need to have an Endowment Fund which will secure our future. So what is this? Legacy gifts are a way to provide financial support in our wills. No one will be here forever. Let's remember not only our families but organizations which have meant something to us in our lifetimes. Non-profits depend on donations for their Endowment funding for the future. We have two Endowments, one to support/help with Eldercare

Continued on page 11

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Image: The NWDA Building in Seattle



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NWDA Programs and News—Christmastime



Danish Christmas in the Northwest

By Emily Olsen



Image Left:
Dancing
around the
tree at
Julestue



Image Right:
Jack and
Lorelei Yager
on Jule-
manden's lap

Godt Nytår! We attempted a return to in person Jul events this year at NWDA. Our pre-pandemic Christmas season typically has had the Circles' Bazaar, Christmas Fest, Julestue, and Lillejuleaften.

We knew early on that the Bazaar could not go on and planned for the third year of the online Juleauktion. We had an unprecedented amount of donations from individuals and local businesses. This was thanks in part to Reina reaching out to so many businesses and making it easier for those who wanted to donate to complete an online form with information. We had more than 350 items as part of the auction and raised over \$11,000 to support NWDA and its programs.

We anticipate having year four of the Juleauktion in November 2023 and accept donations all year long. So, if you have any Danish items, especially Christmas items, that no longer have a place in your home, contact us and

bring them by the Seattle office to start our 2023 auction item collection.

Since we are attempting a gradual return of in person events, and had the Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner later than normal this year, we could not hold a Danish Christmas Fest, but we did plan for Julestue to be held at Harmony Hall again. After two years of "At-Home" Julestue and sending out paper craft kits, it was nice to have people gather for this event.

While it was a smaller group than the few years just prior to COVID changing the way we gather, those who attended enjoyed seeing each other and celebrating Christmas the Danish way as a group. There were flettede julehjerter (woven hearts) made, even a few more difficult ones, and flettede stjerner (woven stars) attempted, because they are quite tricky until you get lots of practice.

We danced and sang around the Christmas tree to Danish and English favorites like Højt fra træets grønne top, Frosty the Snowman, and Nu' det jul igen. Our tradition of a real Christmas tree, donated by Pfaff's Old Time Tree Farm in Auburn, lived on in Harmony Hall. It was wonderful to see, and smell, the tree that reached the ceiling and filled the middle of the dance floor once again.

As the dancing ended, we had a visit from Julemanden! He visited and took pictures with all of the children,

Continued on page 8

Visit our website for more information about events and programs!

Via our website you can also sign up for our e-bulletin to receive updates on all these activities:

www.northwestdanish.org

NWDA News and Programs—Annual Meeting



Return of the Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner

By Emily Olsen



Image: Members and guests at the Annual Dinner after the Meeting

As COVID restrictions have eased, we have revived some in person events in the last quarter of 2022. One of these events was the Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner. It was hosted a month later than has been typical to allow enough time for planning. There are a lot of little, and big, pieces that make up the Annual Meeting and Dinner. The agenda must be set, along with each piece being handled by different board members and staff. Set up, technical challenges, and paperwork can be time consuming in order to be prepared. Dinner is another, albeit related challenge.

In 2020 and 2021 there was no Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner due to COVID. So, we had much to talk about regarding accomplishments of NWDA over the three years since we had last gathered. A word we have heard a lot over the last three years is “pivot”. NWDA

had to pivot to online events in order to continue many of our programs.

As many readers of the Little Mermaid know, I have been involved with NWDA my entire life. You go through many of the old photo albums we have on top of the bookshelves in our library, and you will find what I have come to call “surprise Emilys”, which are pictures of me at events starting at a very young age. This gives me a unique perspective on NWDA and our programs. I have been a kid member and attendee in this organization. I have been an adult member and attendee in this organization. I have been a volunteer and, for just over three years now, I have been staff for this organization.

This was my first Annual Meeting attending as staff, with a presentation needed as well. I was incredibly happy and proud to be able to tell the membership how we have pivoted to online versions of Danish Classes, the

Danish American Cultural Retreat (DACR), Himmelbjerget and Dane Camp (though both got to be in person again in 2022!), and the Juleauktion. Also, how we have been able to have select events in person over the last year, like the Queen’s Birthday and Fredagscafe.

I had an ask of the membership that attended that day, and I will ask it here too: If you have any ideas or requests for events or programs (especially if you can assist in getting it off the ground by volunteering), please contact me. We are about to be 100 years old next August, and we want to continue into the next 100 with programs that encourage growth and participation of our membership and further our mission to share Danish culture, traditions, and values with the wider community.

After the meeting concluded a portion of the attendees stayed to mingle and have dinner. Chef Jørn Mathiasen again wowed us with a fabulous meal. Since he never disappoints, he is given free rein to design a meal that will tempt most Danes. This time he settled on a traditional duck dinner, a cold cauliflower shared starter, and risalamande with cherry sauce to finish. It was lovely to have a marvel-

Continued on page 8

Young Andersen Playing with Prince Frits

By Jan Bruun-Pedersen



Image: Jan Bruun-Petersen crouching in the King's Garden in front of Odense Castle.

Across the King's Garden from Odense's Train Station in the center of the city is Odense Castle. Normally castles in Denmark have a historical link to nobility or the royal family. Odense Castle first was built as a hospital in 1280 by the Order of St. John (later called Skt. Hans Monastery). The order has been around since 1099 and still exists today. Their existence grew out of the Crusades. Their goal is to help the sick and the poor. Skt. Hans Church which was also founded by the Order of St. John is attached to the castle. When the Swedes took over Oden-

se, they broke all the furniture down to kindling for the castle's fireplaces.

After the Lutheran Reformation, the castle became owned by the king. After some remodeling, it was used by nobility. Just before Denmark received its constitution in 1849, the crown prince lived in the castle as Funen's first governor. When author Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense in 1805, the infant mortality was so high that he was baptized right away without going to a church, but officially his baptism was approved at Skt. Hans Church. H.C. Andersen's mother washed clothes at the castle until she died in the

Gråbrødre Hospital after deteriorating as an alcoholic in the poor-house. H.C. Andersen often played with the other children at the castle including the future Frederik VII.

In Odense's history only two people have been called honorary citizens of Odense: King Frederik VII and Hans Christian Andersen. Because of the vast amount of time that Prince and King Frederik spent living in Copenhagen and Odense, Odense started to be called Little Copenhagen. Most of the past 500 years, the castle has been used in various governmental administrative capacities.

The king had a mistress Countess Danner that for awhile lived in the castle with the crown princess. Later Countess Danner left her worldly possessions on her death to found a foundation for poor working women. Today the Danner Shelter empowers women in the spirit of modern feminism.

Notice in the included picture, the castle flies with the Ukrainian flag as a show of support. Skt Hans Church's red brick is to the left and the bronze statue of Frederik VII harkens back to when young Andersen had a royal playmate in his childhood. The statue stands directly under the flagpole.

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NWDA News and Programs—Lillejuleaften



Zooming into Christmas: Lillejuleaften on Zoom

By Kristin Miller

On December 23rd 2022, the NWDA community gathered to celebrate “Lillejuleaften,” or “Little Christmas Eve,” together for the first time on Zoom. After no services were held in 2020, the Portland Lillejuleaften service had resumed in 2021. Portland and Seattle had each planned in-person services for 2022, however both were cancelled due to icy weather conditions in the Pacific Northwest. Nearly 40 people logged into Zoom, but the total number watching was larger as several individuals may have watched from a single account.

Traditionally, the pastor from the Danish Lutheran Church of Vancouver, B.C., travels to Seattle to preach and lead the church service in Danish. This year we were happy to “meet” the newly installed Pastor Carsten Mølgaard Hansen over Zoom. Pastor Carsten led the prayers, scripture readings, and gave the sermon.

We missed singing hymns together which was not possible on the Zoom platform but enjoyed recordings of the DR Girls’ Choir (DR Pige-koret) with “Det kimer nu til julefest” and “Dejlig er Jorden”. Although we could not have “julekage” virtually, Christmas greetings were shared by friends near and far.

The sermon brought a message of how Christmas is about love and the significance of repetition of Christmas traditions in celebrating Christmas. Pastor Carsten also shared the story of an instinctive act of kindness given by a stranger that helped his sister to travel home for Christmas when this seemed potentially impossible.

Several people requested a translation of the sermon, which Pastor Carsten graciously provided. A quote from the end of the sermon is provided below in Danish and in English. The full text of the original Danish sermon and an English translation are available. If you would like an elec-

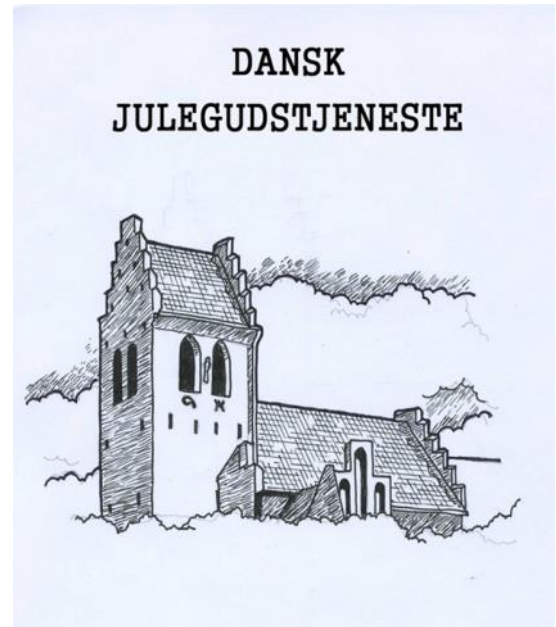


Image: Illustration by Claus Windelev

tronic or paper copy, please contact the NWDA office.

Kære alle sammen. Jeg håber, at I alle får en jul fuld af glæde og latter – fuld af kærlighed. Må vi som Guds børn altid huske at hjælpe der, hvor der er brug for os.

Jeg bliver så glad indeni, hver gang jeg oplever, at kærlighed ikke er noget langt væk. Ikke engang Guds kærlighed er fjern. Snarere er den noget, der er til stede lige her i mellem os på alle de forskellige måder at fejre jul på, der findes.

Må det blive jul for alle på hele jorden, og må julen sætte sit præg på alle vores handlinger hele året igennem. Lad det være vores juleønske i år.

Jeg ønsker jer alle en rigtig glædelig jul. Amen.

Continued on page 10

Cover Story—Reflections on My Time at Askov Højskole



Northwest Danish
Association

Reflections on My Time at Askov Højskole

By Sandra Pedersen

Continued from page 1



Image: Sandra Pedersen and classmates swimming

the inside of my head and let me relive a home that is no longer alive.

Like now, when I go in the water, I'll remember what it was like to winter bath with my Askov friends. The evenings we stood perched on the dock watching jellyfish swaying like small boats. How the water made fish's scaly skin look soft. Looking up at the moon that hung over us like a full, bright halo. How the stars rested above and below us, the sky gleaming with tiny globs of sun and the fjord floor covered in a galaxy of starfish. The many times we yelled and smiled and laughed as the ocean gave us a cold hug.

My most comforting takeaway is that it's alright to never really feel like an "adult." Since moving to Denmark, I've talked with family members, teachers, friends, and I've gathered that very few people really feel like adults. Maybe it's because growing

up doesn't feel like how we expected as kids— it certainly is that way for me. The only time I've really felt like an adult was when I was truly excited over a pair of socks I got for Christmas.

Maybe It's also because of the disconnect we have between how we view ourselves and how others view us. In retrospect, many situations at Højskole called for a confidence and care I definitely did not have in high school. In that sense, I can see how I have become adultish. It honestly seems like being an adult is less of an innate identity and more of an accumulation of actions you choose to make everyday. Some days I'm better at adulting than others, but I'm learning, whether it be in navigating through højskole or setting up the practical stuff— and that counts for a lot.

However, I couldn't have transitioned without the help of my family. Whether it was a home to stay at or a ride to some place, my aunts, uncle, and cousins provided support I will always be grateful for. Truly. They have given me the gift of their time and I hope to not take that for granted. They have been more than a piece of driftwood in a choking sea of change, they have been a lifeboat that has saved me from sinking.

Five months into my stay in Denmark and finding myself in a new year, I'm proud to say I laugh a big woman's laugh, rough and rich and sometimes a bit too loud. But I like to wear this laugh, because it's my own, because it's taken a long time to let my voice take up space.

My last piece of knowledge I've picked up along the way is a Danish phrase I've heard several times over. It is simple and blunt, and that's what I love about it. So to anyone reading this, I assure you, *det skal nok gå*.

Write for The Little Mermaid!

Write about your experience at Danish events in the PNW or other topics related to Denmark or Danish culture.

Contact us at
seattle@nwdanish.org if interested in our publication.

NWDA News and Programs—Continuations



Danish Christmas in the Northwest

By Emily Olsen

Annual Meeting

By Emily Olsen

Continued from page 3



Image: Volunteer Gwen Gyldenege and Leif Sorensen assisting his granddaughters, Liv and Slone Rodriguez, with julehjerter (woven hearts)

including the children at heart (so everyone!) and left them with a little gift bag before he had to leave to get back to the North Pole to finish his Christmas preparations. We concluded the afternoon with hotdogs, gløgg (for the adults), and kringle. Everyone went home with decorations for their own home and Christmas tree, a picture with Julemanden, and a belly full of yummy hotdogs and treats.

Our final event of the festive season is always Lillejuleaften. Both 2020 and 2021 were cancelled and many

were looking forward to the return to the in-person service, both in Seattle and Portland, this year. Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other ideas. One of the worst, if not the worst, ice storms in many years stopped nearly all travel around the Pacific Northwest. All over the country, right as everyone is attempting to travel for the Christmas holidays, snow and ice is hampering people's ability to leave their homes safely.

Due to the storm, and some COVID cases in our community, the Lillejuleaften services had to be cancelled. The Pastor from the Danish Lutheran Church of Vancouver, B.C. could not safely come to Seattle, but our team of Seattle volunteers found a way to have the service, in an amended form, on Zoom for anyone to join if technology allowed.

Please enjoy the article beginning on page 6 of this issue (if you haven't already!) written by Kristin Miller, who, along with Kenneth Olsen, made sure Lillejuleaften returned in 2022.

Those of us at NWDA hope everyone had a safe and joyous holiday season. Please feel free to share any holiday pictures and stories with us, especially how you, your friends, or your family may celebrate with Danish traditions!

Continued from page 4



Image: Barbara Smith and Kaja Voldbæk during Social Hour between the Annual Meeting and Dinner

ous meal and chat with members from around the Pacific Northwest who hadn't been able to see each other for some time.

A dinner like this would not happen without a lot of planning and volunteer assistance! Chef Jørn graciously volunteers his time to create a fabulous meal. Patti Olsen took over table set up and décor. She also handled much of the clean-up. We had a fabulous kitchen and serving team in Gwen Gyldenege, Annika Dunton, Sofia Dunton, and Rivers Nuzum.

We are looking to the future at NWDA and my hope is that we have spectacular things to report at the next Annual Meeting, which should be in October of 2023.

NW Danish Calendar



We are working on restarting in-person events! Sign up for our e-bulletin to receive the most recent updates: www.northwestdanish.org/e-bulletin/

January 2023

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
1	2	3 Work Party (S)	4 DBIA & DSS Meeting (S)	5	6 Fredagscafe (S)	7 DAVS Nytårsfrokost (P)
8	9	10 National Danish Book Club (online)	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	20	21 Danish I (Zoom)
22	23	24	25	26 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	27	28 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
29	30	31				

February 2023

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
			1 DBIA & DSS Meeting (S)	2 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	3 Fredagscafe (S)	4 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
5	6	7 Work Party (S)	8	9 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	10	11 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
12	13	14 National Danish Book Club (online)	15	16 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	17	18 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
19 Fastelavn (S)	20	21	22	23 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	24	25 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
26	27	28				

March 2023

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
			1 DBIA & DSS Meeting (S)	2 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	3 Fredagscafe (S)	4 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
5	6	7 Work Party (S)	8	9 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	10	11 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
12	13	14 National Danish Book Club (online)	15	16 Danish Conversation and Culture (Zoom)	17	18 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Danish I and Danish II/III (Zoom)
26	27	28	29	30	31	

(P)= Portland (S) = Seattle (E) = Eugene

For more information on these events, programs, and activities, please visit our website:
www.northwestdanish.org



Donations: July 2022 to December 2022—Thank you!



Donations and gifts are cumulative from July 2022 to December 2022.



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Zooming into Christmas: Lillejuleaften on Zoom

By Kristin Miller

Continued from page 6

Dear everyone,

I hope all of you will have a Christmas full of joy and laughter – full of love. May we as God's children always remember to help each other and spread kindness towards one another.

I am oh so happy every time I experience that love is not something far away. Not even God's love is distant. Rather it is right here in between us in all the different ways of celebrating Christmas that occur.

May it be Christmas for everyone throughout the earth and may Christmas put its mark on every act we do throughout the year.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Amen.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has donated to NWDA.

We would not be here without your support!

President's Corner—Continuation



One Hundred Years this August Let's Create a Hundred Year Endowment

By Edith E. Christensen, EdD, NWDA President



Image: The original Northwest Danish Old Peoples Home opened in 1924 after the organization was incorporated in August 1923. This building was demolished in 1969 to make way for a new facility on the same property.

Continued from page 2

and another for support for Education.

The Danish Association was created nearly 100 years ago to take care of the later years of retirees. As people lived longer, the Danish Home became a nursing home and less of a home for aging Danes. So the NWDA decided to sell the old home in south Seattle and buy a gathering place instead. It would be for elders and others with a similar purpose of fellowship and programs for all ages to enjoy and learn about the Danish culture and the positive impact of Danes on the environment and other people. It would be a place for hygge.

Some years ago a kind member left a legacy gift for an Endowment for Elders in the Seattle area. Because of this gift we have programs like Torsdagssklubben, a once-a-month meal at noon and a program. We also are able to furnish wheel chairs, walkers, and canes, as well as other help needs like a call button to wear, special hearing phones, personal contacts, etc.

for our elders.

We also have another endowment in which the income helps people with scholarships for their education or retraining. This was created by the donations in legacies by two other members. They made a gift which helps many with their education and retraining for a better life.

These wonderful gifts have made it possible to help our elders and our young. When you are planning and deciding what you want to leave as a legacy, think of the NWDA and how you can help it for a long time into the future. It is so easy to do with a few words in your will. Just talk to your attorney as they are well versed in these types of legacy plans. Perhaps together we can create a Hundred Year Endowment for the future of NWDA to continue another hundred years. What a wonderful legacy to leave.

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NWDA is Hiring!

*Program Coordinator/
Office Administrator*



The Northwest Danish Association (NWDA) is a non-profit organization that strives to enrich community life experience through Danish cross-cultural exchange and social outreach. Our North Seattle office is seeking a full-time, in-office Program Coordinator/Office Administrator to perform in a multi-functional, customer-centric role. As the front face of the NWDA and The Meridian Executive Suites and office building, you will perform three primary functions in the capacity of Program Coordinator/Office Administrator.

TO APPLY: PLEASE UPLOAD AN APPLICATION, RESUME, AND COVER LETTER INCLUDING A DANISH GREETING OR SENTENCE at www.northwestdanish.org/careers/

Northwest Danish Association



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Save the Date:

FREDAGSCAFE, Seattle — January 6th, February 3rd,
March 3rd, April 7th
FASTELAVN, Seattle — February 19th

Monthly Events (subject to change)

- Work Party — First Tuesday, Seattle
(except July & August)
- DBIA & DSS — First Wednesday, Seattle
(except July & August)
- Fredagscafe — First Friday, Seattle
- Torsdagsklubben — Third Thursday, Seattle
(except July & August)

Watch our e-bulletins each week for specific times and dates of programs. Note:
Monthly events are subject to change.

The Little Mermaid

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Jan Feb Mar 2023 #2022/2023 Volume 3

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