

The Little Mermaid



A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHWEST DANISH ASSOCIATION

Jul Aug Sep 2023 Issue #2023/2024 Volume 1

Finding Comfort in Not Knowing

By Sandra Pedersen

After a long week of soaking up the sun and recharging after Roskilde Festival, I once again find myself sitting in the artificial blue light of an airplane on the way back to a home I haven't been to since December.

I thought I'd get used to returning to the US. But it still feels surreal, traveling back to a place that holds so many memories from my teenhood in between the folds of its evergreen trees and long asphalt roads.

I'm enjoying being in the comfort of Washington. I didn't realize how much I missed the bone-deep familiarity that comes with being in a place you grew up in. I know this place like a childhood friend, I don't have any doubt about where the entertaining events or secret peaceful places are, I can easily be sure of myself and surroundings.

But I'm also really happy with how I've gotten to know Denmark as a new friend. In Seattle, I always just "knew" the place and relied on an innate understanding of my environment. But in Denmark I actively get to learn about an area on my own terms. Its pushed me to become more comfortable with finding my knowledge through experimenting, experiencing and asking others for guidance.

Which is a special sentiment, to develop a new sense of intuition that has been mine to create and shape. Espe-



Image: Classmates from Roskilde Festival Højskole spending time together in the sun on nature days in the forest with no technology.

cially as an adult in a country I wanted to find solid ground in, it helped nurture a sense of independence I didn't have before moving.

When I think of the memories I've collected over the past handful of months, I can't help but smile.

Of many slow evenings sitting together at Roskilde Festival Højskole, surrounded by good people and easy laughter that kept us warm late into the night.

Of many moments sipping on green necked bottles and

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

President's Corner



Celebrations of 100 Years

By Edith E. Christensen, EdD, NWDA President

Our NWDA hundredth year is this summer! Be sure to read our every Wednesday e-bulletins so you don't miss any events planned for our celebrations. They will also be posted on our website. There are various dinners, programs, and music for this celebration.

We had a great trip to Hat Island in July. We filled it to the ferry's capacity and had a waiting list. So when you hear about a program, dinner, or get-together we are having, you won't want to delay signing up as they are quite popular.

These dinners and programs are announced in the Wednesday e-bulletins we send out. If you are not on the mailing list for that, you can sign up on our website, or call the office. We have events coming up in August and September which are often by reservation. Some are special programs, special foods, or musicians. Don't miss out!

We have reserved Menucha in Oregon for our autumn (instead of early summer) Danish Cultural Program event. It will be held on September 8, 9, and 10. We are excited about going back to Menucha in Oregon in person. We will hold it in the fall

this year and next. Watch the e-bulletins and the website for information regarding signing up.

Sonja has reserved some great speakers for this event. Watch our e-bulletins for more information. We have reserved Wright Hall and Ballard Hall at Menucha for the three days in September. The two buildings are close together just across the road from each other. We are already getting reservations, so go on the website to sign-up now. Call the office if you need help with that.

We need a person now and then with the skill of playing the piano to accompany singing. If you can or know someone who might be willing to do that, please let us know.

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*The Seattle Danish Center is in
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Image: The NWDA Building in Seattle



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NWDA News and Programs



Remaining 100th Anniversary Events

By Emily Olsen



There is so much going on at NWDA in the second half of 2023! We are finishing out our first 100 years and beginning our second with as much fun as we can pack in.

August

- On Saturday, August 12th: The Portland Danish Picnic will be at Ed Brannfors' Ranch in La Center, WA.
- On Sunday, August 13th: All-Dane Community Picnic in Washington will kick off anniversary week. The Buuses have graciously offered to host again at their home and property in Woodinville.
- On Friday, August 18th: On NWDA's 100th Anniversary, join us for an evening open house at Harmony Hall in the Seattle Danish Center building.
- On Saturday, August 19th: NWDA Portland will be celebrating our 100th year with a day-time event on the campus of Nordia House.
- On Sunday, August 20th: Meet up with NWDA at the Sounders Match to cheer on the Seattle Sounders against Atlanta United FC.

September

- On Friday, September 8th through Sunday, September 10th: The Danish American Cultural Retreat is back at Menucha! Visit www.northwestdanish.org/dacr for more information.
- On Saturday, September 23rd: We will be holding a 100th Anniversary Jubilee Gala. This should be a big party to celebrate our major milestone. Tickets will be available to current NWDA members soon and then open to everyone else if available.

Check the weekly e-bulletin for details, or call the office at 206-523-3263, or email emily@nwdanish.org.



SCAN ME



Use the QR code above to get to the Bonfire Page to view and order shirts!

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

Cover Story



Finding Comfort in Not Knowing

By Sandra Pedersen



Image: Sandra (R) and her classmate Mathilda building a shelf for the lounge areas of common ground (camping space at festival)

sucking on cigarettes while exploring different worlds, from the big steely walls of the højskole to the dusty open campsites and filmy tents at Ros.

But what I truly treasure more than the memories I've collected is the lovely people I've found and get to call my friends. I've met some gems of human beings, sharing good company and feeling safe navigating the world of friendship beyond a school setting.

Especially during the festival, it was a lifesaver having people I could stretch my sore-sunburned limbs with on the cold grass or discover and dance to new music with.

I'm not really tied down by anything physical in Denmark. I don't have living commitments or a job to show up to yet. It's the pull of the

people I've found while living here that rest a hand on my shoulder and tell me Denmark can be my place.

Now, as I start stepping out of the højskole bubble that has helped me ease into moving across continents, my skin buzzes with excitement about the possibility that lies ahead of me.

I look forward to having all my bits and bolts in one place, though right now I am in transition. I have to find my footing soon, but it doesn't feel as overwhelming as it did in August.

When I first left the US, I had felt a bit bruised before I'd even fallen. Now though, I know that when I find myself once again leaving my first home, my story will be different. It will be punctuated by fewer unsure steps forward and doubts for my future, but they will still be characters in my journey. But now I'm able to feel encouraged by the unknown and hopeful for what possibility it entails, which is a sense of peace I've come to cherish.



Image: Sandra (R) and her roommate Karoline sitting in our tent at festival.



Image: Sandra (R) and her classmate Maria working a late bar shift in the back yard of the Højskole in bar golf.

From Denmark



Experiencing the Cold War in the Danish Countryside

By Jan Bruun-Petersen



Image: Jan Bruun-Petersen entering a Mil Mi-8 helicopter at Panzer Museum East.

I recently visited a unique museum with some friends in Slagelse called Panzer Museum East. Panzer is the German word for tank. The Danish word would be spelled panser. I first thought that the "East" in the name was just describing one of a group of tank museums in Denmark, but I was mistaken. Panzer Museum East gets its name from focusing on the Eastern Bloc of Communist countries in Europe during the Cold War (from just after World War II until the breakup of the Soviet Union). It is the largest Nordic exhibition of its kind. Since the Eastern Bloc or Warsaw Pact also included the DDR or East Germany, there are many Germans that come to visit the museum. The exhibits are explained in English, Danish and German.

From a Dane's standpoint when visiting the museum, they can see lots of Soviet equipment that could have been used to invade Denmark. Thank goodness, the Cold War was a type of stalemate, so

there was no actual fighting or invading. A special uniform exhibit focuses on Warsaw Pact uniforms from countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland and the DDR.

The founder of the museum is Alan Pedersen. When he was young, he would bicycle around Zealand visiting military exercises. Then the Cold War was still on and he was very curious about what was secretly happening behind the Iron Curtain. Over 25 years, he started to collect many former Cold War equipment and uniforms. His daughters encouraged him to start to exhibit his collection so others could enjoy learning about these pieces of history. He has added more and more to the collection and does not have the heart to part with any of it, so the collection keeps growing.

For the bulk of the Cold War, East Germany's army was called the National People's Army or in German: Nationale Volksarmee (NVA). I was able to go into a very large Russian-built helicopter painted with NVA col-

ors. This helicopter was designed initially by Russian aerospace engineer Mikhail Mil, thus there have been a series of helicopters made with the designations such as Mil Mi-4 and Mil Mi-8. The Mil Mi-8 is the world's most produced helicopter (over 17,000) made in 40 different variations for civilian or military use. Some of these helicopters have many seats for up to 30 passengers. The Mil Mi-8 I was in had two seats for the pilots, but in the main cabin, there was a military jeep parked with its windshield folded down to more easily drive into the helicopter. About 80 countries have used this type of helicopter including the United States.

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NEED A SPACE FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT?

Conveniently located near Northgate between Aurora 99 and I-5, Harmony Hall in Seattle features a full kitchen, dance floor, and can host up to 112 people or can be divided in half.

Call the NWDA at [206-523-3263](tel:206-523-3263) for more information.

NWDA News and Programs—Himmelbjerget



Himmelbjerget Danish Camp 2023: Hans Christian Andersen

By Kayti Hilzinger



For the week of June 25th through July 1st, the Dannebrog flew high and mighty over the beautiful grounds at the Menucha Retreat and Conference Center in Corbett, OR as Himmelbjerget celebrated another successful year of Danish Camp. This year's camp had 34 campers – 18 of whom were coming to Himmelbjerget for the first time! We are so extremely grateful to be seeing this type of growth as we are emerging out of the pandemic.

This year's camp theme was Hans Christian Andersen and campers spent the week learning about his life and the incredible stories he wrote, among many other accomplishments of his. Many of our evening activities and games were tied to the plotlines of some of his most famous tales. Our big Thursday evening event was centered on the story of the Snow Queen where campers had to brave icy waters, solve floral riddles, and work together to defeat the Queen while earning stones for the family group.

A huge part of what makes Himmelbjerget successful is our use of "family groups" to break up the large camp into smaller groups. This year, we had 4 family groups (Purple, Red, Green, and Blue) that consisted of 3 counselors, 2 sen-

ior campers, and 6 to 7 younger campers. Throughout the week, campers worked to earn stones for their family group by speaking Danish, competing in games, holding the door open, or doing other kind things. While all the families earned stones well into the multi-hundreds, the Purple Family came out on top this year with the win and got to sit at the head table for Friday Night's Dinner.

Other fun events during the week included getting to eat delicious smørrebrød (open faced sandwiches) on Wednesday, diving into the chilly pool for an early morning Polar Bear swim on Thursday, and performing in the Variety Show on Friday night!

We had such a great group of campers this year and we already cannot wait for what lies ahead for next year! **Save the dates** – Himmelbjerget 2024 will be held June 23rd – 29th with the theme of Danish Royalty!

The best way to stay up to date on Himmelbjerget is to visit our website, nwdanishcamp.com, or to follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

Danish Community Events—The Trolls Are Coming



Northwest Trolls: Way of the Bird King

By ScanDesign Foundation



*Image: Thomas Dambo in Belgium
(Courtesy of Thomas Dambo)*

Beginning in August 2023, a new six-site art exhibition entitled Northwest Trolls: Way of the Bird King, will be unveiled. The unique project features six giant hand-built Nordic troll characters, designed by acclaimed Danish environmental artist and storyteller Thomas Dambo, to be installed at five locations in the Puget Sound region and one in Portland, Oregon. Scan Design Foundation is managing the collaborative effort with funding, media and site partners from across the region. “We are excited to showcase the creative ingenuity of Dambo’s work to Northwest audiences in this ambitious exhibition,” said Fidelma McGinn, president of Scan Design Foundation. “His message of turning trash into treasure and building community through art will

resonate with all who experience his mystical troll sculptures.” Dambo’s high level of creativity drives the creation of highly interactive experiences, turning recycled materials to immersive, interactive, and awe-inspiring art. Today, he is known internationally for his larger-than-life troll sculptures. With 100 sculptures all over the world, these trolls have begun to have a life of their own, inspiring “troll hunters” to seek them out and fulfill Dambo’s vision of creating art that inspires people to get outside to explore, have adventures, and protect our natural spaces. The Way of the Bird King will be the first Dambo trolls to be placed in the Pacific Northwest, linking this region to the worldwide phenomenon.

The project celebrates the human experience of art by amplifying the network of cultural her-

itage between Coast Salish tribal communities and Danish and Scandinavian traditions. It reinforces the shared values of environmental stewardship for watershed protection, restoration, and preservation of riparian habitats. Because the trolls will be located on traditional Coast Salish territories, the project is working closely with the Muckleshoot and Snoqualmie tribes. As part of the project, a companion map and app will be released to engage the public in finding out precisely where each troll is located in Portland, Issaquah, Ballard, West Seattle and on Bainbridge and Vashon Islands. To capture the curiosity of the public and contain an element of surprise in discovering them through a scavenger hunt adventure, the specific site locations will only be revealed at the conclusion of each build process, between August 1st and

Continued on page 8



*Image: Sutte Trollden Sanka (Pacifier Troll) Copenhagen, Denmark
(Courtesy of Thomas Dambo)*

Danish Community Events—The Trolls Are Coming



Northwest Trolls: Way of the Bird King

By ScanDesign Foundation



Images: Working with Volunteers to build trolls (Courtesy of Thomas Dambo)

September 17th. The sculptures will be hosted at each site for at least three years. Fashioned entirely out of recycled materials, the large-scale public art installations tell a tale of protecting nature and honoring the land and waterways. With a focus on understanding the impact of humans on life in watersheds and animal habitats, the project includes a companion story focused on restoration and preservation of riparian habitats in an approachable, fun way. It provides opportunities for youth and adults alike to learn, support, and make a

difference in protecting our environment. “I want people to know that trash has value. My trolls do that, and also help me tell stories, like the legends I grew up with,” said Dambo. “In nature, there is no landfill. Nature is circular, everything has a meaning and everything is recycled.” A key part of the troll installation is leveraging a community of local volunteers. For this project, over 200 volunteers will be dedicating their time to help complete the sculptures, from disassembling wooden pallets, cutting up wood pieces,

screwing and hammering parts, to clearing brush and making meals for the crew. Funding for the full exhibition series is provided by grants from Scan Design Foundation and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. Additional sponsorship support has been provided by Alaska Air, Icelandair, National Foundation for Danish America, Republic Services, and Re-Use Consulting. The site partners for the six sculptures include the City of Seattle Parks, City of Issaquah Parks, Vashon Parks District, Bainbridge Island Metro Parks District, National Nordic Museum and Nordic Northwest. Media partners include the Embassy of Denmark, Visit Seattle, Washington State Tourism and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation.

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.

NW Danish Calendar



Sign up for our e-bulletin to receive the most recent updates: www.northwestdanish.org/e-bulletin/

July 2023

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
						1 New Membership Year Starts!
2	3	4 American Independence Day	5	6	7	8
9	10 Conversation Group (P)	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 Hat Island Cruise (S)
23	24 Conversation Group (P)	25	26	27	28	29

August 2023

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
July 30	July 31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Danish Picnic (P)
13 All Danes Picnic (S)	14	15	16	17	18 NWDA 100th Anniversary! 100-Year Open House (S)	19 100-Year Event (P)
20 Sounders Match (S)	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
					1 Fredagscafe (S)	2
3	4 Labor Day	5 Work Party (S)	6 DBIA & DSS Meeting (S)	7 DBIA Meeting (E)	8 DACR (Menucha)	9 DACR (Menucha) DBIA & DSS Meeting (P)
10 DACR (Menucha)	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 100-Year Jubilee Gala (S)
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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



Donations: July 2022 to June 2023—Thank you!



**Donations and gifts are
cumulative from July
2022 to June 2023.**



**Donations and gifts given
from new and renewal
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ored as part of July 2023 in
our next issue!
Mange Tak!**

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Barbara Smith

Noble Dane

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Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15
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Aage Jensen
Gene and Ruth Jensen
Gary Korsgaard
Kenneth and Annie Kromann
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**A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has
donated to NWDA.**

We would not be here without your support!

Mange tak!

In Memory—Birte Geijsbeek



Memorial—Birte Geijsbeek

Birte was born and raised in Denmark. Upon completing nursing school in Copenhagen, she became a Danish exchange nurse. Though she would maintain close ties to her home country throughout her life, an American adventure called to her.



Her nursing career of over 40 years began with exchange nursing assignments in Boston, Denver, and finally Seattle, where she established roots. She worked in the operating room at Harborview for ten years and then at Swedish Hospital for thirty years, where she was head nurse of open-heart surgery, before moving on to vascular surgery.

Birte met her future husband while working at Harborview and later, their son was born there. Her support for her son was unwavering. She instilled her own adventurous spirit in him, always encouraging him to go forward and innovate. Exploration was in her heart, especially space exploration and aviation—interests she shared with her son. They were often seen together at aviation events, air shows and flight museums, celebrating their special mother-son bond. Always an

admirer of innovation, she enjoyed learning of new technology breakthroughs and their potential impacts. Birte loved spending time outdoors exploring the mountains of the Pacific Northwest and was especially fond of Mount Rainier—the Cascade skyline was a stark contrast to the rolling hills of her native Denmark.

She loved cats and over the years, she and her husband took in numerous feral and domestic cats. These cats were cherished and enjoyed a comfortable and happy lifestyle. Birte was well loved by family and friends and touched so many lives. She so enjoyed bringing people together to share each other's company, especially over a meal. Her spirit will always remain with us....

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/

NEED A SPACE FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT?

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Save the Date:

FREDAGSCAFE, Seattle —September 1st, October 6th
100-YEAR OPEN HOUSE, Seattle—August 18th
100-YEAR EVENT, Portland—August 19th
100-YEAR GALA—September 23rd

Monthly Events (subject to change)

- Work Party — First Tuesday, Seattle
- Fredagscafe — First Friday, Seattle

(all events listed above are not held in July & August)

Watch our e-bulletins each week for specific times and dates of programs. Note: Monthly events are subject to change. Some programs do not run in the summer.

The Little Mermaid

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