

The Little Mermaid



A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHWEST DANISH ASSOCIATION

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Nu Er Det Jul Igen - Julestue 2023

By Emily Olsen

One of my favorite events of the year is Julestue. I think it is because I love Christmas traditions, crafts, and songs more than almost anything, and that is exactly what this event is. Every year Seattle-area Danes gather to make julehjerter (woven hearts), julestjerner (woven stars), candleholders with greenery, and so much more.

It took me years of practice to make those woven stars and most years there are at least a few people who come away from Julestue with that new budding skill as well. Karla Craig, an NWDA board member, taught many people this year since she is an expert at both the woven hearts and stars. That is just the start.

After crafts, the whole group gathers around the beautifully decorated Christmas tree in the middle of the dance floor. Every year, the Building Work Party decorates the tree that was graciously donated by Pfaff's Old Time Christmas Tree Farm. Erik Pfaff and Britt Pfaff-Dunton, both NWDA board members, make sure we have a spectacular tree each year. Mange tak!

Christmas songs, in both Danish and English, are sung while the group dances around the tree. It is always so fun to traverse the whole of Harmony Hall and even the hallway while singing Nu Er Det Jul Igen as we finish. A big



Image: Mads, Wes, and Lincoln Kristensen making woven hearts

thank you to Stina McLamore this year for leading the singing and dancing.

As the singing winds down, we have a special visitor, and this year was no different. Julemand (Santa) came to meet all the children (and adults) and hear what they wanted for Christmas. Julemand had a gift for each child and kindly sat for photos with everyone. Tak, Julemand, for your visit!

Once Julemand headed back to the North Pole, we ate hotdogs, and the grown-ups had some gløgg. Some people

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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.

Executive Director's Corner



Who is Preben?

By Preben B. Pedersen, NWDA Executive Director



Image: Preben B. Pedersen

It was great to see many of you for NWDA's Lillejuleaften event on Dec, 23rd, 2023 and I trust that all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In 2023 Edith Christensen decided to retire after 17 years of dedicated work as President and Executive Director for NWDA.

The Board of Directors elected Vice President Gary Korsgaard to replace Edith as President of NWDA and I was honored to be selected by the Board of Directors to be the new Executive Director of NWDA upon Edith's retirement.

The question then is who is Preben B. Pedersen, the new Executive Director of NWDA?

I was born in Spentrup which is a little town outside Randers in Jutland. At a very young age my family relocated to Vejle in Jutland where I attended elementary school (7 years), real school (3 years) and gymnasium (3 years). In between, I spent 1 year in Ohio USA as an AFS (American Field Service) exchange student, and that was in the Bicentennial year 1975/76.

After finishing school in Vejle I attended Handelshøjskolen, Aarhus Universitet" where I graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration. After graduating, my first job was in Copenhagen where I then lived and worked for some years.

In 1987 I, via a friend from business school, was offered a position in the US Seattle subsidiary of a Danish company, and I lived (Ballard) and worked in Seattle for 2 years. After Seattle, I relocated many times with this company. First to Germany, then to headquarters in Aarhus before transferring to a subsidiary in Bangkok, Thailand. After Bangkok, I went to Naestved, then Møn, then back to Bangkok.

After bouncing around from country to country, continent to continent, for several years it was time to take a breather and my girlfriend at that time, now my wife, and I decided to take a 1-year sabbatical. In the first 6 months, with a base in Bangkok, we paid visits to Europe and the USA. For the last 6 months we planned to buy a car/camper for a corner-to-corner trip in the USA. However, that plan was interrupted as I was offered a position in a subsidiary of a Danish company located in Davenport, Iowa. I accepted the position and we moved to Iowa. After about a year I was offered another position in a subsidiary of a Danish company located in Olympia, WA. Since WA was kind of the home state to my wife, we decided to

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Image: The NWDA Building in Seattle



Board of Directors

Officers

Gary Korsgaard, President
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Preben Pedersen, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Karla Craig
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Aage Nielsen
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Erik Pfaff
Claus Windelev

NWDA News and Programs



Annual Meeting and Dinner 2023

By Emily Olsen



Image: New Board President, Gary Korsgaard, and New Executive Director, Preben Pedersen, addressing the annual meeting attendees

The NWDA Annual Meeting and Dinner was moved back to October in 2023, after having been in November in 2022. We had a hiatus, due to COVID, for 2020 and 2021. This year's meeting was a meeting of change. We had two board members retire, which called for elections of new members. We also have a new Executive Director and a change in the board President. Also, updated bylaws were approved by the membership.

First, I want to thank Edith E. Christensen for her years of dedication to

NWDA. Edith was board president and volunteer Executive Director for 17 years. Her efforts, along with those of her late husband Frank Christensen, have kept NWDA going and able to continue our work sharing our Danish traditions, culture, and values with the PNW and beyond.

With Edith's retirement, a new board member for Washington was needed. The membership elected Patti Olsen to fill that role. NWDA also needed a new President of the Board. Former Vice President Gary Korsgaard was chosen by the board, and agreed to assume, that role. This allowed the newest board member, Lars Kasch, to step up into the role of Vice President.

We also had the retirement from the board of Lois Toftemark. Thank you to Lois for your years of service to NWDA and the PNW's Danish communities. This necessitated an election of a new Oregon board member as well. Aage Jensen was elected to represent Oregon.

Another big change with Edith's retirement was the need for an Executive Director. After many discussions, Preben B. Pedersen was chosen to become the Executive Director and handle the day-to-day operations of NWDA, beyond his duties as board Treasurer. There is a lot to learn, but Preben is up for the work.

The last big update brought forth at the 2023 Annual Meeting was the long-awaited update to the bylaws. Board members have been working diligently on this task to best support NWDA as it functions now and into the future. The membership present approved the updated bylaws that are now in effect.

Once all the business was out of the way, many attendees stayed for the delicious dinner prepared for us by fabulous Chef Jørn Mathiasen (who as you can see did not want me to take his photo). He made a love salad started served in little bamboo Viking ships and a lovely main course of poached turkey and vegetables. Mange tak, Jørn!

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*The Seattle Danish Center is in
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Image: Chef Jørn hiding behind Lisa Toftemark and Annelise Kro-mann



NWDA News and Programs



Nu Er Det Jul Igen - Julestue 2023

By Emily Olsen

Continued from page 1

picked back up their crafts and most continued conversations with family and friends, new and old. Julestue is a lovely way to kick off the Christmas season and I hope you can join us next December. Glædelig Jul og Godt Nytår!



Image: Verity Merola meeting Julemand with grandpa Michael Merola



Image: Julestue attendees dancing and singing around the tree

Image: Beverly Sorensen, and Liv and Sloane Rodriguez with Henning Buus making candle stick holders



Lillejuleaften 2023

By Emily Olsen



On Saturday, December 23rd the traditional Danish Christmas Service was held at St. John United Lutheran Church in the Phinney neighborhood of Seattle. After COVID and severe ice and snowstorms keeping people away for 3 years, it was lovely to gather again for this reverent tradition.

With about 120 people in attendance, extra chairs were added so as many people as possible could join in for the service. Pastor Carsten Hansen made the trip down to Seattle from the Danish Lutheran Church of Vancouver, B.C. Pastor Carsten is the new Pastor at the church in Canada and, due to last year's storm, this was his first trip to Seattle for the Lillejuleaften service. Thank you to Pastor Carsten for making this trip and visting with the Seattle Danes to share his message this Christmas.

Members and Pastor Carsten shared prayers in Danish, celebrating the story of Christmas and the birth of Jesus. The hymns were led by an enchanting choir directed by Heather MacLaughlin Garbes. We would not have had a choir without Kristin Miller coordinating the rehearsals, songs, and recruitment. All of the music for the evening was beautifully played by Nathan Jensen on the organ. Thank you, Heather, Kristin, and Nathan.

After the service, the attendees gathered in the fellowship

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From Denmark



The Scouts' Own Store

By Jan Bruun-Petersen



Image: Jan Bruun-Petersen in front of Spejder Sport in Næstved.

Denmark houses five scouting organizations rooted in the ethos of Robert Baden-Powell's British-originated worldwide scouting movement, initiated in 1907. These Danish groups include Det Danske Spejderkorps (the largest with 36,000 members), KFUM-Spejderne (partly affiliated with the Danish State Church), De grønne pigespejdere (exclusively for girls), Danske Baptisters Spejderkorps (associated with the Baptist Church), and Dansk Spejderkorps Sydslesvig (serving the Danish minority in Southern Schleswig, Germany).

Det Danske Spejderkorps, the largest organization, has included both boys and girls since 1910, becoming fully coeducational in 1973. Scouting in Denmark is structured into five age brackets, welcoming participants from as young as 3 and extending up to 24 years old. More-

over, adults, even after their scouting tenure, can opt for leadership roles.

In Næstved, my hometown, I had the chance to speak with a couple of former scouts now employed as adults at Spejder Sport, a chain comprising over 20 outdoor equipment stores. It's no coincidence that these individuals found their way here. Post-World War II, Det Danske Spejderkorps faced challenges in acquiring enough material for scout uniforms. Consequently, in 1945, a uniform depository was established at Nørre Farimagsgade 39 in Copenhagen, utilizing surplus war materials, like parachutes, to provide uniforms and tents for scouts. Later, there came more supplies and equipment, Denmark's inaugural outdoor store, Spejder Sport, took shape.

The entire store chain is owned by the 36,000 members of Det Danske Spejderkorps. Profits from the chain are reinvested into scouting, and scouts enjoy a 10 to 20 percent dis-

count on purchases at these stores. Spejder Sport boasts its own brand, Asivik (Greenlandic for "summer living place"), alongside other renowned brands like Columbia, Bergans, Fjäll Raven, and Patagonia.

Recently, I listened to a podcast by WEAR Denmark—an industry association for apparel and textiles—where the CEO of Spejder Sport, Thomas Vangsgaard, discussed a new environmentally-friendly initiative called "Retur" (meaning "return" in English). Despite higher labor costs in Europe and Denmark, Spejder Sport opted to absorb expenses, contributing to sustainability and resource conservation. The Retur facility, situated in the basement of the original Copenhagen store, offers quick repairs for outdoor gear at reasonable prices. Additionally, Retur sells used equipment and conducts courses to educate customers on equipment repair, aided by contributions of spare parts and materials from Fjäll Raven.

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.

From Denmark



Northwest Danish
Association

Reflecting on My History as I Look to My Future in Denmark

By Sandra Pedersen



Image: Sarah and I celebrating a delicious staff breakfast

In the fall, I thought the next few months would continue to spread me out like dandelion seeds. And for a while, it did. I felt like a shaken root, with my bits and bolts blown all over. Parts of me left in Hojskole, others left in Washington with friends I missed, and

handfuls lost in the anxieties of finding an apartment, a job, all of it.

But now, as the city settles after the absolute storm of the holiday season and a new year sings sweet words of potential— I can confidently say that fear was just a ghost that never came.

I find myself living in Norrebro, next to the Sortedams Sø with two lovely roommates. One is Danish and studying to be a nurse. The other is Polish, with a downright impressive skill and passion for cooking. Our home is filled with warm laughter and the smell of homemade jam. Evenings are often spent sharing cultural experiences, differences, and growing each others' perspectives.

I also find myself working as a waitress at Soho House. Since starting in October, I've found such a pure sense of community and more budding friendships than I could've hoped for! It has seriously brought me so much joy.

But it's still been challenging making my way through this new phase of life. Some days are emptier than others, especially during Christmas. It was my first one in Denmark

without my parents or brother, and their absence weighed on my heart. I found comfort in spending Christmas with my cousin and making a few WhatsApp calls, but I found myself spinning a bit off my axis. Once again, trying to find balance in the world of adulthood.

With my workplace closed for the holidays and most of my friends away visiting family, I suddenly had a lot of free time to think.

I thought about my mother, she's shorter than me but in every other sense I look up to her. How she stands straight and tall like a soldier girl. Her brown eyes - two fistfuls of earth, full of so much love and an unwritten record of all she has been. The oldest sister, the second caretaker to her siblings. The first daughter to leave the warm waters of Thailand for the chilled coasts along the west.

I think of my dad, who seems like he came up with the land - shoulders set sturdy like an oakwood tree.

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Images: Left—Some friends and I discovering the Ikea ice cream machines in Hamburg

Right—Sophie and I taking the metro to a work friend's graduation party



NWDA News and Programs—Oregon



A Season of Celebration

By Kimbra Kasch



Image: Pastor Jørn Muller presiding over Lillejuleaften

Christmas, it's more than just a day and means more than mere presents. It's a time for friends and family and even feasting. That's the reason it's the most wonderful time of the year.

This season begins on the first day of December in Danish households everywhere. It's known as advent and children wait with barely contained anticipation to open their first calendar present. That's when the countdown begins...

And, waiting for Christmas is like standing around the kitchen, when you're hungry, waiting for the Æbelskiver to be served. It doesn't matter if you're young or old, people can hardly wait.

Perhaps that's why Lillejuleaften nearly rolled us over, like a giant Æbelskiver, it surprised us all. We were expecting 60 people to show up for the Christmas service at Nordia House, in Portland, but nearly 150 sat down to listen to the wonderful words of Pastor Jørn Muller. We had to expand the space to get everyone inside. Luckily, the giant walls were movable.

Finally, after pulling out more than twice the number of chairs we'd originally planned on, Magical music was performed and the beautiful Lucia Court walked the aisles of the service, with lit candles on



Image: Smørrebrød at DAVS Nytårfrrokost

their heads. It was a spectacular sight.

The end of the evening was celebrated with Marzipan Kringle and Gløgg. So, everyone went home with a full stomach to wait for the jolly old Julemanden (or "Julemand") also known as Santa Claus.

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



Image: The attendees at the Lillejuleaften service

NWDA News and Programs



A Season of Celebration

By Kimbra Kasch

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Image: Kaja Voldbæk being presented her award for being added to NWDA's Wall of Honor by Executive Director Preben Pedersen

But that wasn't the end of the festive food or the celebration. The Danes rang in the New Year to herald the beginning of 2024 with a DAVS (Danish/American Vintage Society) smorgasbord.

But before the food was finished, the NWDA Executive Director, Preben Pedersen, came from Seattle to present a special gift of gratitude to Kaja Voldbaek and the entire group sang songs in her honor, while we celebrated Kaja's and Hanne Voldbaek's years of service to the entire Northwest Danish Association, as well as the Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Together those two women helped build this community into what it is. Now, as they escape the coming snowstorm by moving to Arizona, where they can enjoy the sunshine and perhaps a little game of golf every now and then, we all want to wish them well.

And, remember Robert Burn's melody of Auld Lang Syne – it emphasizes the importance of old friendships and fond memories.

Reflecting on My History as I Look to My Future in Denmark

By Sandra Pedersen

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Caring ocean eyes that tell tales of the many seas he's crossed. The youngest son who holds stories of the countries he's explored. The boy in a family of sisters, who continue to live in his hometown.

When I reflect on my roots, I find peace. I think of all the journeys and trials and transitions that happened before my time. All the life that has been lived by my parents, by my grandparents, by family I've never even met. These people and the constellation of actions have helped get me where I am today, long before I even existed. I'm not entirely sure why, but it's a comfort to know that. To feel like I'm a part of some invisible web, where I can add some of my own string. Maybe for someone that isn't even here yet.

So, as the January sun shines all white and soft, I listen to the easy demeanor of the weary winter breeze and continue to spin and stumble.

Image: Saturday brunch my roommates and I made together



NW Danish Calendar



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

January 2024

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
	1	2	3 DBIA Meeting (S)	4 DBIA Meeting (E)	5 Fredagscafe (S)	6
7 DAVS Nytårfrkost (P)	8 Conversation Group (P)	9 Work Party (S)	10	11	12	13 DBIA and DSS Meeting and Installation (P) - POSTPONED
14 Succession Ceremony Viewing Party (S)	15	16	17	18	19	20 DBIA & DSS Installation (S)
21	22 Conversation Group (P)	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2024

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
				1 DBIA Meeting (E)	2 Fredagscafe (S)	3
4	5	6 Work Party (S) Lene Andersen Talk (S)	7 DBIA & DSS Meeting (S)	8	9	10 DBIA & DSS Meeting (P)
11 Fastelavn (S) Fastelavn (P—at NNW)	12 Conversation Group (P)	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Conversation Group (P)	27	28	29		

March 2024

Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
					1 Fredagscafe (S)	2
3	4	5 Work Party (S)	6 DBIA & DSS Meeting (S)	7 DBIA Meeting (E)	8	9 DBIA & DSS Meeting (P)
10	11 Conversation Group (P)	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25 Conversation Group (P)	26	27	28	29	30

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



Donations: July to December 2023—Thank you!



Donations and gifts are cumulative from July 2023 to present.



Grand Dane

Thomas Woodbury

Great Dane

Jette Bunch
Jim and Birte Falconer
Nils and Kathleen Jensen
Minna Brask
Otto Brask

Bold Dane

Nina Pedersen
Barbara Smith

Noble Dane

Sandra Boeskov
Henning and Greta Buus
Edith Christensen
Gene and Ruth Jensen
Ulla Kauffman
Audrey Larson
Claus Mercer
Marvin and Sandra Nelson
Peder Nielsen
NorthWest Construction Control
Hans Olsen

Anne Lise Pedersen
Linda Pedersen Holt
Britt Pfaff-Dunton and Chris Dunton
Leah Rei
Dan Rovira
Bo Schultz-Andersen
Inger Seiffert
Jean Sparks
Annie and Jan Syberg
Lisa Toftemark

Royal Dane

Dianne and Paul Anderson
Sonja Brewer
Diane Chapman
Joann Derie
Kirsten Fischler
Ronald Glaus
Dorrit Gruendell
Vivi Hammond
Helle Hansen
Donald Haslett
Aage and Diane Jensen
Dain Jones
Kenneth and Annie Kro-mann
Annemarie Lorenzen
George Nelson
Emily Olsen
Patti Olsen
Nicholas Pate
Beatrice Reiss
Nancy Roach
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Hanne Thiede

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Jorgen Bader
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Sandra Miller
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Restricted Contributions

Eldercare

Ernst and Linda Jensen

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David and Rhonda Frick-Wright
Ernst and Linda Jensen
Lois and Svend Toftemark



In Memory of Georg Pedersen

Else Christensen

In Memory of Birte Geijsbeek

Dianne Anderson

In Memory of Nels Peter Koberg and Agnes Jacobsen

Jonathon Shepard

In Memory of Margit Pressmann Christensen

Linda Christensen

In Memory of the Stavinsboj Family

Ezekial Hale

Lillejuleaften 2023

By Emily Olsen

Continued from page 4



Image: Part of the choir

hall for coffee, julekage graciously donated by Larsen's Bakery, and cookies. It was a wonderful time to catch up with old friends and meet some new ones.

It was a time for people to gather and celebrate Christmas with a Danish tradition that has lived on in the Pacific Northwest for decades. Thank you all for your support of our Danish community and coming together at this most reflective time of the year.

As a new aspect of Lillejuleaften, this years' service was available for those who could not attend in person. There was a livestream on the NWDA YouTube channel, and that recording is still available to view any time you like. Thank you to Grant Boling for his work in streaming the service.

Thank you also to Preben Pedersen, Somkul Asava-aree, Kenneth Olsen, Pat Rukrutham, Thomas Buus, Sandy Buus, Emily Olsen, and so many others who made Lillejuleaften possible in 2023.

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

We would not be here without your support!

Mange tak!

All Donations are Tax-Deductible!

The Northwest Danish Association is a 501(c)(3) organization registered in the State of Washington (Tax ID: 91-0565541)

Executive Director's Corner—Continued



Who is Preben?

By Preben B. Pedersen, NWDA Executive Director

Continued from page 2

move to WA in 2003, and we have been Washingtonians ever since.

In 2004 we expanded our family with twins Sandra and Peter. They graduated from high school in 2022 and, following graduation, they relocated to Denmark to attend Askov Højskole for 6 months. They enjoyed their initial 6 months stay in Denmark and today they are still in Denmark.

I was elected as Treasurer for NWDA before Covid and for a few years worked closely with Edith's husband Frank Christensen, who contributed 15 years of dedicated volunteering for NWDA. From that cooperation I had good insight into the NWDA organization. Based on this insight and my professional career, where I primarily have worked in financial positions including general management, I was ready for a change and to take on the position as Executive Director of NWDA.

A few USA/Seattle curiosities to mention:

The morning after I returned to Denmark after my 1-year stay in the USA, as an AFS foreign exchange student, I told my dad that it was only a matter of time before I would return to the USA to work and live. That goal has materialized as I have come to the USA 3 times in my life to live for school/work and the last stint has now lasted more than 20 years.

At my 2nd stint in the USA, I worked with a well known Danish Seattleite Mr. Lars Mathiesen.

During my Bangkok years I met a well known Danish Seattleite, Mr. Kenneth Olsen, who also at that time worked and lived in Bangkok.

My family had an American girl staying for a year as a foreign exchange student in Denmark. By coincidence she came from WA and today she lives with her family in Kirkland, and I consider her my American half-sister with whom we have celebrated many Christmases and Thanksgivings.

I got married during a stopover in Honolulu, Hawaii and the marriage was arranged

by a Danish friend who worked at the Honolulu branch of a well-known Seattle based Danish furniture store.

If anyone has a question, please ask me when you meet me at an NWDA event or in the NWDA office.

In the transition, Edith has been a great help conveying the knowledge and experience she has accumulated over her 17 years running the NWDA office, and she is always ready when an issue comes up where she can provide advice and guidance, so a Big Thank You to Edith.

Current President Gary Korsgaard has also been instrumental in the transition as he has and still does provide his professional advice and guidance on issues related to the building and on the commercial leases for all the tenants in the NWDA building.

I am looking forward to working for NWDA and all of you in the years to come.

NEED A SPACE FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT?

The Seattle Danish Center is available for special events such as birthdays or anniversaries.

Conveniently located near Northgate between Aurora 99 and I-5, the Center 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.

Anna Falck—Memorial

FEBRUARY 22, 1925 – NOVEMBER 6, 2023

A memorial will be held at **St. John United Lutheran Church: 5515 Phinney Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103** on **Saturday, February 24th at 11am**. If you plan on attending, please text Karla Craig at 425-260-7587.



Northwest Danish Association



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Save the Date:

WORK PARTY, Seattle—Feb. 6th, Mar. 5th, Apr. 2nd
FREDAGSCAFE, Seattle —Feb. 2nd, Mar. 1st, Apr. 5th
LENE ANDERSEN TALK, Seattle—February 6th
FASTELAVN, Seattle & Portland—February 11th

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.

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