

Serving the
Danish Sisterhood of America Since 1947

Danish Sisterhood News

MARCH 2026



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- ◆ News from President Nealna.
- ◆ Lodge events from the recent past.
- ◆ Upcoming Lodge events: 2026 will be an amazing year!
- ◆ Rest in Peace to Sisters who have passed on.
- ◆ Fabulous items for sale: Danish Sisterhood Butikken.
- ◆ Plan for the Annual Rebild Convention in Nashville.





President's Corner



Greetings, Sisters!

March is always an exciting Danish Sisterhood month for me. It is the month when most of the applications for scholarships arrive in my mailbox. Granted a few diligent students get them done early and they arrive before March, but most of them come in March or just before. It is so wonderful to see the excitement of young people who are about to embark on a new part of their life or more seasoned people deciding to make a change and attend college. The Danish Sisterhood has offered scholarships to members and their children since 1970 when at the 16th National Convention in Milwaukee, members decided to begin a scholarship program. The first National Scholarships were awarded in 1973 with funding coming from the Fraternal Benefits account.

Currently we offer 10 scholarships: 6 Betty Hansen National Scholarships (\$2500 each); Elizabeth Garde Scholarship (\$850); Mildred Sorensen National Scholarship (\$1,000); Olga Christensen National Scholarship (\$1,000); Past National Officers Scholarship (\$500). I have been looking back through all the old scholarship books to determine how they were started and the amounts of each. I am truly amazed at all the scholarship money the Danish Sisterhood has given to support students in their pursuit of education. DSS is an amazing group of people! When I get all the information sorted out, I will write an article for the Newsletter about the history of the scholarships. Look for that in the future.

Now comes the hard part. Seven of those ten scholarships are endowment scholarships, meaning the interest on the endowment is what is used for the scholarship. However, three of the scholarships (Mildred Sorensen, Olga Christensen, and Past National Officers) were set up to be dependent upon donations.

Article continued on page -3-.

Danish Sisterhood News

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Queen Margrethe II of Denmark**

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Dear Sisters and Mister Sisters:

Velkommen

Wishing you all a wonderful upcoming spring! Spring in America starts on March 20, 2026 at 7:46 a.m. This date marks the spring equinox, when day and night are approximately equal in length. I would love to hear about the activities that lodges have participated in during winter as well as now that we approach spring. How many lodges participated in and/or sponsored Fastelavn this year? Remember, readers would love to hear about your lodge activities!



**Charlene M. Jensen,
Editor**

~~Charlene Jensen, Editor

Send articles/stories/photos to: editor@danishsisterhood.com

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ON THE COVER: An equestrian statue of King Frederick V of Denmark stands in the center of Amalienborg Square, Copenhagen, framed by the four symmetrical wings of the Amalienborg palace. The statue portrays the king in classic attire, crowned with laurels and with his hand outstretched, holding a baton. Commissioned by the Danish East India Company, it was designed in Neoclassical style by Jacques Saly in 1768 and was cast in bronze in 1771. The dignity and tranquility in the depiction of the king is typical of Danish representations of monarchs. It is considered to be one of the notable equestrian monuments of its time.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN (continued from Page - 2 -)

These scholarships are running low on funds. During my 6 years on the board, we have never asked for donations specifically to the scholarship fund. I am doing that now. If you, or your lodge or your district, would like to have a fundraiser or donate funds to the scholarship program, it would be greatly appreciated. You can send your donations to treasurer Linda Brooks. AND a huge thank you to those of you who have already sent scholarship donations. Your generosity is so appreciated. Thank you!!

Also in March, the Spring Board meeting will be held in Chicago. We will be staying at the hotel that will host the 2027 National Convention. I am so excited to be there and meet with the Chicago Lodge #4 as convention planning is well underway. Thank you, Lodge #4.

Please let a board member know if you have any concerns or ideas. We are here for you.

Sisterly,

Nealna

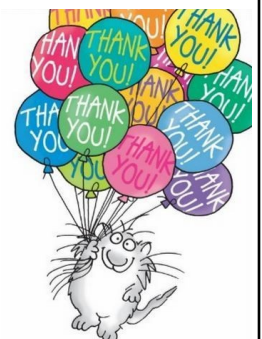
Nealna Gylling, National President
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Thank you for your generosity



- Solvang Lodge #177
- Solvang Lodge #177
- California District
- Nealna & Don Gylling

- Scholarship fund
- Camp grant fund
- Scholarship fund
- Scholarship fund



NEWS FROM THE LODGES

IN MEMORIAM—For March 2026

NAME	Cert #	Lodge #	Location	Birth Date	Birth Place	Initiated	Died	Benefit
Lorriane Harris	19882	20	Kenosha, WI	5.2.28	Kenosha, WI	9.4.46	11.26.25	250.
Donna Carlsen	24359	20	Kenosha, WI	6.8.37	Racine, WI	2.19.87	12.21.25	1000.
Aase Hansen	25591	68	Los Angeles, CA	12.21.35	Copenhagen, DK	7.1.06	9.16.25	500.
Cheryl Bentz	24086	49	Ludington, MI	11.23.44	Manistee, MI	4.21.82	11.2.25	1000.
Karen Marasco	23842	102	Des Moines, IA	7.24.42	Austin, MN	9.17.80	12.22.25	500.

Youth Birthdays—March 2026

Name	Lodge	Age
Thomas Keough	21	14
America Cole	68	14
Phoebe Volious	102	10
Bella Dupont	188	4



MEMBERSHIP CORNER



PHOTO ABOVE: Haabets Fremtid Lodge #78, Troy NY, and Lodge #142, Schenectady NY, celebrate Gladys Christensen's 70 years of membership in the Danish Sisterhood of America May 2024. Gladys continues to be a devoted, supportive Sister of Lodge #78.

By Marilyn Dore.

The month of March has two consistent dates of note. The first is St. Patrick's Day, and the other is the first day of Spring. Both days bring images of green grass, longer warmer days, and flowers, especially the daisy.

The daisy is the National Flower of Denmark. The daisy is also the official flower of the Danish Sisterhood of America. A common symbol system is a common characteristic shared by members of an organization. Besides the daisy, all members of the Danish Sisterhood of America share a common interest of Danish culture, traditions, and perhaps ancestry.



We celebrate our long-standing members who have nourished the mission of the Danish Sisterhood of America through the years, in some cases through the decades. Like the daisy, their guidance, knowledge, support, and friendship has supported the Danish Sisterhood of America with cheerfulness, and love.

REST IN PEACE, MARGRETE LOUISE (NIELSEN) CYMANSKI



Margrete Nielsen was born on May 24, 1938 in Rocky Ford, Colorado to Jens Peter and Anna Gertrude (Larsen) Nielsen. Her father was born in Ebeltoft, Denmark, growing up in the Randers region. Her mother was born in Fowler, Colorado, but her parents were from the Fyn region in Denmark.

Margrete lived on a farm in Fowler and was introduced to the Danish community at a young age. Her father belonged to the Danish Brotherhood for over 85 years. They celebrated many occasions at the Dane Hall. As a youngster, it was such a good time because all the Danes' birthdays and anniversaries were celebrated. Many other events, including dances, were also celebrated at the Dane Hall.

On March 17, 1962, Margrete was married to Gabriel John Cymanski in Greeley, Colorado. They have three children: Timothy Michael (Zack and Austin), Brian Jens (married to Sondra) and Tamara Michaele (Spencer and Bierly). Margrete was a Medical Technologist at Children's Hospital in Denver. In her spare time she liked to read, crochet, cross-stitch, travel and go camping.



Margrete was initiated into Ellen Lodge 21 on June 3, 1966. She held Trustees' offices and was the Treasurer for several years. She was also a member of the Danish Brotherhood and enjoyed attending conventions that Denver shared with Brush, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming. She was also a charter member of the Denver Danes. She and Gabe had many great experiences and friends throughout the different Danish organizations.

In 2002, Gabe and Margrete moved to the Holiday Spa Mobile Park in Arizona to help raise her grandchildren. Besides her grandchildren, she kept busy playing shuffle board, and organizing social community activities at the Park. She and Gabe enjoyed Arizona pro sports, but their heart was always in Colorado.

Gabe passed away on May 31, 2022. Margrete passed on July 19, 2025. Margrete would encourage all young people to live life to the fullest, to explore their heritage, and to be kind and friendly to everyone, treating them as equals.

MEMBERSHIP EXPANSION for March 2026

<u>LODGE</u>	<u>NEW MEMBER</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>
300	Kristine Wollrich	online
300	Michael Gunlund	online
300	Patricia (Trish) Gunlund	online
185	Med Andersen	Minna Mortensen
300	Jo Bartlett	online
102	Cheryl Rigler	Joan Shaffer
300	Janet Hasson	online
4	Anita Lerche	Bente Vinci
300	Britt Lopez	online
185	Pamela Schnackel	Minna Mortensen
300	Deborah Jensen Malley	online
300	Julie Hahn	online

TIVOLI GARDENS

By Christine Rindone, Western Star Lodge #113, Grand Island, NE.

Tivoli Gardens, or Tivoli, is an amusement park and pleasure garden in the heart of Copenhagen, Denmark. It is one of the oldest amusement parks in the world. Tivoli was founded in 1843 by Georg Carstensen. He had to get royal permission to open Tivoli and opened the gates on August 15, 1843. Mr. Carstensen said, "When the people are amusing themselves, they do not think about politics".

Hans Christian Andersen was among the first visitors and Tivoli is what inspired the fairytale, "The Nightingale".



Tivoli Gardens' original entrance was a modest wooden gate flanked by ticket booths. In 1980, the grand main entrance and its adjacent buildings were constructed and are there today. The entrance fee initially was one Mark or 12 cents. The cost was increased to approximately \$6, then \$8.50 then to \$11.50. In 1845, they introduced the Tivoli pass. You could purchase passes for a single gentleman, a gentleman and a lady, and a gentleman and two ladies. In 2024, 4.25 million had visited the park. The park is open from April—January.

The park has a total of 25 attractions, four roller coasters and two water rides. The wooden roller coaster is one of the oldest that is still in operation today. The first Ferris wheel was steam powered with six gondolas. It was erected in 1884. There are now three Ferris wheels.

PHOTO ABOVE: Tivoli Gardens. Photo taken 5/30/2021. Author is European Commission. [File:Tivoli Gardens 4.jpg - Wikimedia Commons](#)

The Nimb hotel is on site and includes a restaurant. It is an oriental style palace.

The Pantomime open-air theater was built in 1874 and is the oldest building. It takes five men to operate the mechanical front curtain. The curtain unfolds like a peacock's tail.

The Dragon Boat lake features dragon boats. This lake is a scenic spot, especially during Christmas when the gardens are illuminated. The lake has a Japanese Pagoda on it. The pagoda houses a tea room with Danish and Asian food. The park now has many pop-up restaurants with renowned chefs.

The Tivoli Concert Hall was built in 1956 and hosts diverse performances, from classical music to popular artists.

Mr. Carstensen established the Tivoli Youth Guard in 1844 for 8–16-year-olds. The guard grew into a popular cultural institution. It was one of Denmark's best music education programs. Today, the guard welcomes both boys and girls.

The H.C. Andersen Hall was built at the park in 1893 to honor Hans Christian Andersen. The hall is used for meetings and events.

In 1943, Nazi sympathizers burned many of Tivoli's buildings to the ground. Temporary buildings were constructed and the park was back in operation in just a few weeks.

Article and photographs continued on the next page.

TIVOLI GARDENS (continued)

By Christine Rindone, Western Star Lodge #113, Grand Island, NE (continued from page - 6 -).



PHOTO LEFT: Tivoli pantomime theater, Copenhagen, Denmark. Author and date of photo: Niels Elgaard Larsen—Usec (WT-shared) Elgaard at wts Wikivoyage. [File:CphTivoliPantomime.jpg](#) - [Wikimedia Commons](#)

PHOTO RIGHT: Tivoli Gardens Japanese tower and boating lake. Author and date of photo: MattXDA, December 28, 2014. [File:20141228-MAT 1324.jpg](#) - [Wikimedia Commons](#)



PHOTO LEFT: Sala de Concertos do Tivoli, Copenhagen. Author and date of photo: [Tivoli Concert Hall.JPG](#); [Lala Lugo](#) , March 20, 2010.



PHOTO LEFT: Concert of a youth orchestra in Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. Author and date of photo: Jakub Halun, June 18, 2022. [File:Concert in Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen, 20220618 1302 7149.jpg](#) - [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Continued on the next page.

TIVOLI GARDENS (continued)

By Christine Rindone, Western Star Lodge #113, Grand Island, NE (continued from page - 7 -).

Mr. Carstensen was director of the park for five years. In 1848, he joined the troops fighting the First Schleswig War. He was let go by Tivoli's board for breach of contract. He then left Denmark but eventually returned and created a rival entertainment venue, the Alhambra in Frederiksberg. However, he died of pneumonia in January of 1857 at 44 years of age. His new venue opened in the summer of 1857.

Mr. Carstensen said in 1844 that "Tivoli will never be finished". Walt Disney, just one century later, said of his own Tivoli inspired theme park that "Disneyland will never be completed".



PHOTO LEFT: The lake Tivoli Søen with the ride Dragebådene (the dragon boats) and the restaurant Det Japanske Taarn (the Japanese tower) in the amusement park Tivoli in Copenhagen. [File:Tivoli Søen 03.JPG - Wikimedia Commons](#)

Author of the photo: [Leif Jørgensen](#).

Date: May 21, 2015.



PHOTO LEFT: Nimb Hotel, Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen.

Author and date of photo: Jakub Halun, June 18, 2022.

[File:Nimb Hotel, Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen, 20220618 1210 7131.jpg - Wikimedia Commons](#) .

PHOTO BELOW: Denmark, Copenhagen, Boulevard H. C. Andersens. Author and date of photo: Marie Thérèse Hébert & Jean Robert Thibault from Québec, Canada, May 24, 2016.



UPDATE FROM LODGE #185 CLEVELAND, OHIO — 2025 EVENTS

By Laurel Covell and Minna Mortensen, Lodge #185.

December – Annual Danish Christmas Party held at a party center. About 110 people attended this year. The meal is catered and is mainly American with the addition of roast pork, red cabbage and Danish cookies baked by our members. Music was provided by singer/accordion player Fred Ziwich. Everyone enjoyed singing carols around the Christmas tree in Danish and English, folk dancing, a visit from Santa and a raffle. In addition, we recognized our member Joan Swanson who recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

November - Lodge anniversary dinner at restaurant in Oberlin and Danish String Quartet concert at Oberlin College. We really enjoyed the amazing concert by this well-known Danish group.

October - This year the Danes organized the annual Leif Erikson celebration with the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian communities. Danish Consul Chris Langmack read the federal proclamation about Leif Erikson Day and then we had an Akvavit skål in the parking lot by Leif's statue. Afterwards, we enjoyed lunch and fellowship at a nearby restaurant.

September - Meeting and lunch at Minna Mortensen's new home in a retirement community. We made and enjoyed some smørrebrød (open-faced sandwiches) and other food that members brought.

August - Tour of Struers, a Danish metal and lab equipment company that's located in a suburb of Cleveland. We enjoyed lunch afterwards at a nearby restaurant.

July - Annual picnic at Marilyn Brandt's home. We enjoyed delicious food, including Danish style pølser (hot dogs) and a Sankt Hans bonfire.

May - Meeting held at library. Program: Show-n-Tell of Danish related items by our members. We enjoyed some Danish smørrebrød and other treats and learned the Danish words for the food.

April – Meeting held at library. Program: Virtual tour of Denmark through videos.

March – Meeting held at library. Program: Fastelavn. We watched some videos, sang the traditional Fastelavn song, made "Fastelavn'sris" and enjoyed Polish pączki which are similar to Fastelavn's boller. Children and grandchildren of members participated in "hitting the cat out of the barrel" and were rewarded with some candy.

February – Meeting held at library. Program: Ruth Mortensen reported on Danish immigration to the U.S and Brotherhood and Sisterhood history. We also listened to a recorded interview with Arleen Janmey's mother about her immigration to the U.S.

Minna Mortensen, President
Laurel Covell, VP/Secretary
Danske Damer/Cleveland Danes
Lodge #185 Cleveland, Ohio

PHOTO RIGHT: Christmas party, December 2025.



Photography by Laurel Covell and Minna Mortensen.

Continued on the next page.

UPDATE FROM LODGE #185 CLEVELAND, OHIO — 2025 EVENTS (continued)

By Laurel Covell and Minna Mortensen, Lodge #185. Continued from page - 9 - .



PHOTO UPPER LEFT: Leif Erikson celebration, October.
PHOTO UPPER RIGHT: Struers tour, August



PHOTO ABOVE: Fastelavn, March 2025.

PHOTO RIGHT: Picnic, July 2025.



Photography
by Laurel Covell and
Minna Mortensen.

NEWS FROM DANISH SISTERHOOD LODGE #102, DES MOINES, IOWA

By Donna Archer, Lodge #102.

Our November meeting focused on planning for the upcoming year, including the 2026 officer transition, future programming, donation recipients, and events. Claudia Holcomb has been nominated for President and Jeannie Clark for Vice President, while all other officer positions will remain unchanged. During the meeting, a sign-up sheet was circulated for the 2025 Julefrokost, with members volunteering to prepare items from our traditional Danish menu. Additionally, several members celebrated Kirsten Lundgren's 93rd birthday with a visit to Valley View Village.

The December Julefrokost was a festive success despite a winter storm. While we had 75 initial reservations, approximately two-thirds of our guests braved the weather to attend. The multi-course feast featured open-faced sandwiches with various toppings, fish, meats, cheeses, and sweets. We enjoyed beer, homemade aquavit, and Christmas carols, concluding the meal with a traditional "skål!" Desserts were served on Danish plates donated to Luther Memorial Church by our members over the years, making for a truly "hygge" gathering with friends and Sisterhood members.

During the event, we were pleased to initiate three new members: Phyllis Jessen, Claudia Galletich, and Gayla Cady. We also presented milestone membership awards to Kirsten Lundgren for 65 years of service and to Linda Holz for 60 years of service.



PHOTO ABOVE: Julefrokost was a festive success despite a winter storm.



PHOTO ABOVE: Linda Holz and Kirsten Lungran earned milestone membership awards.

RESOLUTION—A LIFE REMEMBERED JANE CLUETT HANSEN, TROY, NY LODGE 78

Jane Cluett Hansen, age 92, was born in Troy, NY. She was educated in Troy, graduating from Russell Sage College with a degree in Physical Education. Jane met her first husband in Cleveland, Ohio where she was working as a physical education teacher and he was studying agriculture. They married and moved to his family farm in Denmark where they raised five children. After the sale of the farm in 1978 and divorce, Jane and Arthur married and moved to the United States in 1987 settling in Petersburg. Art passed away earlier this year.

Jane joined Lodge 78 in March of 1999. It was such a joy to have her as one of our Sisters as she shared so many memories and stories. Of course, both Art and Jane spoke Danish, and many conversations and songs were shared, from cooking to fellowship ideas and much more. She made the best red cabbage for some of our dinners. They hosted a yearly open house on New Year's Day where her house was decorated Danish style including the tree with real candles. We also attended some picnics in their yard where she often hosted some wild life. I enjoyed seeing the many Danish decorations she had in her home, including a small village her grandmother gave to her when she was a young girl.

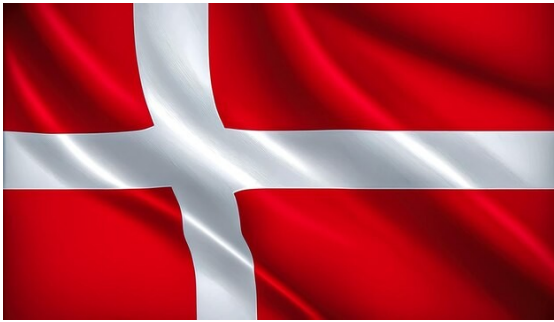
Jane passed at her home on October 22, 2025. Jane and Art you are missed, but you will often be in our memories.

By Marjorie Wheeler, Treasurer of Troy, NY Lodge 78.

LODGES SHARE THEIR IMPORTANT MEMORIES

PHOTO RIGHT: Dagmar Lodge 4 After Christmas Party. Paul Nielsen is seated near the dessert-filled kitchen of the Dagmar lodge party. *Photography by Lars Rasmussen.*

**See additional Dagmar Lodge 4 article and photos on page 13.*



Passing of a Sisterhood Member, Lodge #102

Karen Ann Marasco, 83, passed away on December 13, 2025, in Des Moines, Iowa, the city where she spent the majority of her life and built a loving home. Born on July 24, 1942, in Austin, Minnesota, Karen moved to Iowa in her youth and was a proud graduate of the Valley High School Class of 1960. Throughout her life, Karen had many talents. She worked professionally as a skilled tailor and later as a dedicated real estate agent. However, she considered her most important roles to be those of a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Karen's favorite time of year was Christmas. She cherished the holiday season and poured her heart into bringing her family together to celebrate. Her warmth and festive spirit will be deeply missed this season and always. She is survived by her husband, Camillio Marasco; her daughter, Vanessa Baker; her son, Phillip Marasco; two grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.



On December 13, 2025, Lodge #90, Lincoln, NE had our Christmas party. We enjoyed a delicious lunch and had a great time talking. We decided to bring warm hats, gloves, scarves, or socks to donate instead of our usual gift exchange. Robert, church employee, took our picture. Left to right front row: Mary Stanley, Dawn Buss, Fran Freeman, Donna Hansen. Back row Ane McBride, Jane Nyffeler, Molly Boyd, Donna Thomas. On January 10, 2026, we met: During our meeting all officers were elected to stay in office another year. We all brought cans of soup to donate to the food pantry. We decided to bring a food item each month. Best wishes for the new year to all the Sisterhood lodges!
—Fran Freeman, Lodge #90, Lincoln NE
Photography by Robert, Church Employee

DANISH SISTERHOOD LOVE: DAGMAR LODGE 4 IN 2026

Respectfully Submitted by TLC Nielsen, Dagmar Lodge 4, Chicago, IL.

I'm so grateful that my grandmother-in-law, Marie Nielsen, invited me to become a member of the Danish Sisterhood in 2005, shortly before she passed away at age 95. I had always loved taking her to the Danish Home for Dagmar Lodge meetings when my youngest was a baby, so I continued visiting her there when she moved into the Danish Home at age 87. I've enjoyed these past 20 years as a Danish Sister, happy for the opportunity to be part of a community that Grandma Marie treasured.

I love being involved with the Sisterhood for the community and, in our large Chicago lodge of 90+ members, there are always so many activities for us throughout the year. January brought us our After-Christmas Party, hosted by Lodge president Lea Abarientos-Olesen (see photos) and my spouse made Danish bread, Rugbrød (ROO-brurth), and a Danish cake called Lagkage (LAW-kay-uh) to share. But there are so many community opportunities scheduled, so here's a list of the year of fun for Dagmar Lodge 4 thus far.

- Fastelavn boller baking and Winter Luncheon gift basket assembly (Feb. 15) with 10–20 members
- Fastelavn (FASS-tuh-lown) celebration with the Danish American Athletic Club including costume contest for adults plus hitting the candy-filled cat barrel (Feb. 22)
- Winter Luncheon Annual Fundraiser with Frikadeller (free-kah-DELL-er) March 7
- Our fun lodge meetings in person and Zoom (March 22, July 19, Oct. 18, Nov. 15)
- Participation in Norwegian Parade with Sisterhood lodge meeting afterward (May 17)
- Danish Home of Chicago Family Picnic with volunteer opportunities (June 27)
- Æbleskiver (AY-bluh-skee-ver) and Dagmar Lodge 4 Booths at Scandinavian Days at Vasa Park (Sept. 13)
- All Danish Christmas Service with reception (Dec. 12)

If you're ever in the Chicago area and would like to drop by, please reach out to me or another Dagmar Lodge member for details. I know I try to find out about Danish events wherever I travel. You can also meet some of our Chicago Dagmar Sisters at the April Rebuild Convention and the September Sisterhood Denmark Trip as well as at events held locally by The Dania Society, Women's Auxiliary of the Danish Home of Chicago, and the DAAC (Danish American Athletic Club).

My lodge is also in the process of planning for the next Danish Sisterhood Convention, so mark your calendars for Sept. 30–Oct. 2, 2027. I love being part of the Danish Sisterhood community and now my two granddaughters are members as well. I'm hoping to talk my spouse into becoming a Dagmar Lodge Mr. Sister next!

Photography by Lars Rasmussen.

PHOTO RIGHT: Dagmar After Christmas Party. Christmas Party group shot at the Olesen home.



PHOTO LEFT: Dagmar After Christmas Party. Food table for the Chicago lodge's post Christmas party with Rugbrød.



FINDING OUR DANISH CONNECTIONS

By Tracey Nielsen, Dagmar Lodge 4, Chicago, IL.

My international travels really started in 2017, all because someone in Denmark reached out to my husband's family. After finding as many relatives as he could in his country—including some his family knew nothing about—Niels Andersen had decided to track down family of his grandmother's siblings who had emigrated to America. With the help of the staff at the Museum of Danish America in Iowa via email, this Danish man was given the names of Hans Peter and Elna Marie Steffensen Nielsen. They had come to America separately but met and married in Chicago. From there, he discovered that Peter and Judy Nielsen still lived in the area and reached out to them, my in-laws. Success!

Because of this, my husband Paul and I started emailing this newly discovered Danish relative and soon decided we would have to go to Denmark to meet him. My husband, Paul, even started learning Danish through DuoLingo in preparation.

A few months before our flight, however, Paul's father, Peter, passed away unexpectedly; he was the glue that held our family together. Traveling to Denmark would become a pilgrimage for us from then on as we learned that our small American family had a very big Danish contingent: Peter had 31 first cousins in Denmark he never knew. And our newly discovered cousin, Niels, looked a lot like his mother's cousin, my father-in-law (see photo on page -15-), although his last name is Andersen.

Through Facebook and MyHeritage.com, Paul and I were able to extend the Nielsen genealogy research to Grandma Marie's side of the family—the Steffensens—thanks to Niels' initial family history. Each trip we take means meeting a new branch of the family. So far we've met over 50 family members in the past nine years. And a few of them have even come to visit us in return, thank heavens.

We met Harry and Grethe Nielsen and their family in 2024 when we brought along our newly graduated granddaughter, Lily. They had celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary just before our visit, proudly showing us their congratulatory letter from the King of Denmark. We were also shown a letter of congratulations from the Queen of Denmark for Harry's retirement as a fireman. This year, we hope to meet someone from Grandma Marie's sister Hanny's branch of the family tree. Hanny had 14 children, but we experienced trouble finding any of her grandchildren up until recently.

Thanks to Niels, we have connected with a few Danish family members who live in the U.S.—one in Chicago and one in Colorado—from Paul's great grandmother's Frederiksen family. We've been amazed at how instant our connection has been to these newly found relatives. For our next international trip, we're heading back to Denmark to attend Niels' 80th birthday party. We are so honored to be invited.

Our plans also include going to Iowa this year to visit the Museum of Danish America to see two plaques that will be newly installed on the Museum's Wall of Honor with the names Elna Marie Steffensen Nielsen and Hans Peter Nielsen inscribed. Now it's time for us to find the Danish and Swedish connections in my family tree, using the Danish Family Search and the digitized records from Denmark (rigsarkivet.dk).

Photography by Tracey Nielsen, Dagmar Lodge 4, Chicago, IL.



PHOTO ABOVE: Paul's Dad, H. Peter Nielsen, Jr.



PHOTO ABOVE: Our Steffensen family took us to the Rhododendron Park at Nivaagaard (nivaagaard.dk), a must-see place on your next trip to Denmark.

Continued on the next page.

FINDING OUR DANISH CONNECTIONS (continued)



By Tracey Nielsen, Dagmar Lodge 4, Chicago, IL.
Continued from page - 14 -.

PHOTO LEFT: Flemming Steffensen (L) and wife Edith are Peter Nielsen's first cousins, pictured with some of their family (grandson Colin Lillholm, Paul Nielsen, Jesper and Leif Brun Pajor).



PHOTO RIGHT: Paul Nielsen (L) talks with relative Niels Andersen about family history on our 2025 visit to Denmark.

Photography by Tracey Nielsen, Dagmar Lodge 4, Chicago, IL.

DANISH SISTERHOOD BUTIKKEN

Visit the DSS Website Marketplace-Butikken to see all items available for purchase.



PHOTO LEFT: DSS Iron On Patch, 3"x 2.25". Cost is \$5.00.



PHOTO LEFT: Hanne Michelsen, Treasurer from Dagmar Lodge #4, is wearing our Unisex Gilden V-neck Softstyle 100% cotton royal blue T-Shirt. Cost is \$24.00. Sizes are Medium to 2XL

PHOTO RIGHT: Onesie red w/ white lettering (6/12/18 months). Cost is \$15.00.



To order, contact:
Karen Vig-Keathley
Email:
trustee3@danishsisterhood.com
Phone: 708.715.0071
109 South First St., Itasca, IL 60143
Note: Prices do not include shipping and handling. All prices subject to change.

PHOTO BELOW: DSS Swedish Dishcloths. Cost is \$7.00 each.



PHOTO LEFT: Kimberly Hansen Vice President from Dagmar Lodge #4 is wearing our Unisex Gilden long sleeve 100% cotton royal blue t-shirt. Cost is \$28.00. Sizes are Medium to 2XL.



Danish Sisterhood News

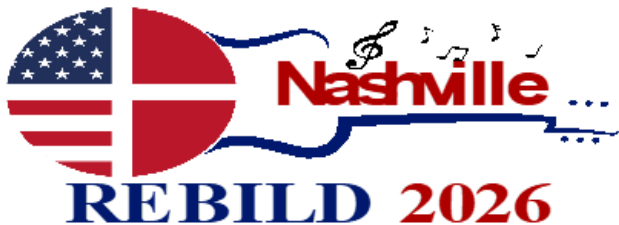
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Greetings from Linda, Elsa & Elizabeth Steffensen
Proud Members of the Danish Sisterhood
Dagmar Lodge #4, Chicago, IL

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