

a letter from the president

I'm honored and humbled to be writing to you as the President of the Board of Directors. I have thoroughly enjoyed my two years on the board, even with the unprecedented issues that the pandemic created for the museum in 2020. I'm delighted to say that the museum came through the year very well. I think this is the case for several reasons: its staff, its board, and its members and volunteers.

The staff has been taking care of business for years. I've come to know them as a talented and motivated group. This past year they have, led by Executive Director Tova Brandt, rolled up their sleeves and figured out new ways of doing things in a very unusual environment. That has been a key factor in the year's successes.

Over the years the board has provided sound guidance to the museum's executive directors. The board consists of ordinary people like you and me. They are from all around the country and bring a wide variety of expertise and experience. Pride in their common Danish-American heritage binds them together in a special way. They share the desire to tell the story of Danes in America, past, present and future.

And you, our members, have consistently provided outstanding financial support, even in the challenging year of 2020. For example, the response to the Museum's letter this fall, appealing for donations, was the largest on record.

Like many non-essential entities, the museum closed to the public in March. With the appropriate adjustments, it reopened three days per week in July. Then it made the hard decision to close again, just before the Elk Horn and Kimballton celebration of Julefest in late November in order to protect staff, visitors, and the community at a time when infection rates were very high, locally and throughout Iowa.

But the business of the museum did not stop. It continued to open exhibits and found new ways for

its constituents to enjoy them. It continued its online messaging and publication of the *America Letter*. It began producing a major monthly online program for its members and internet visitors, which is no small effort. And behind-the-scenes work, such as the ongoing cataloging and care of our collections of objects, books, printed material, and photographs, continued. It also made adjustments, such as increasing the pace of Design Store e-blasts to partially offset the loss of foot traffic due to the closing and the cancellation of on-site events. As a result, online sales have been strong.

None of the staff was furloughed or laid off. The museum even filled several open positions. Quick action by Board Member Randy Ruggaard, Tova, and Shelby County State Bank resulted in the receipt of a Payroll Protection Plan loan before that program's initial funding was exhausted. The loan has become a grant, since the museum met the terms of the program. The museum has also sought and received a generous Iowa Arts & Culture Recovery Program grant.

Looking to the future, the board in October approved a new Strategic Plan for the years 2021 through 2023. We realize that the descendants of the immigrant generation are aging and that new generations may have different interests. We will seek to discover which of our local, regional, and national audiences offer the best opportunities for engagement, visitation, and membership, and what programs would appeal to identified audiences. The plan seeks to answer those questions by trying new approaches and measuring their impact. By the end of 2023, we believe we will have a clearer idea of the actions that the museum needs to take to create a sustainable future.

An example of a new approach to attracting a different demographic is the MoDA-produced YouTube channel established to provide a continuing series of videos that add content to our *New Nordic Cuisine* exhibit, which is now on tour at other museums. Seventy-six percent of the viewers of our channel are between the ages of 25 and 34. Now that's different!

While 2021 will present ongoing challenges as the country and the world move toward a more normal state of affairs, the museum is in a good position. It will continue to explore the Danish-American experience of the past, present, and future while creating ways to remain relevant in a changing world.



By Pete West

board of directors

The 2020-2021 Board of Directors is a special group of men and women who have unselfishly dedicated themselves to the preservation of their Danish American heritage and the mission of the museum. They join an elite group of individuals who, over the past 37 years, have worked to build and maintain a museum of which all Danes, Danish Americans, and the American public can be proud.

Participating at their own expense, board members come together three times a year to share their skills and experience in providing oversight to the administration of the museum and to develop ideas and plans that will contribute to its continuing vitality. It is the practice of the board to meet each February and June in different locations around the United States, so that they may share and celebrate heritage

and culture with those Danish Americans who may not otherwise be able to link directly with the museum. In pandemic 2020, the board was fortunate to hold its February meeting in Solvang, California. Then in response to the Covid-19 crisis, the board held its June meeting virtually, with election of new board members. In October the board meeting was once again held virtually via Zoom. The museum's annual meeting was also held virtually with new board members assuming their office; outgoing members present and participating.

Without the dedication, energy, and support of a strong, team-oriented board of directors, the museum staff would not be able to work effectively in managing the day-to-day operations of the Museum of Danish America.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SERVING IN 2020

Erik Andersen, *Croton-on-Hudson, NY*
 Carol Bassoni, *Gilroy, CA*
 Beth Bro-Roof, *Cedar Rapids, IA*
 Joy Clemsen Gajda, *Lindenhurst, IL*
 David Esbeck, *San Diego, CA*
 Dennis Gray, *Winston-Salem, NC*
 Peder Hansen, *Omaha, NE*
 Connie Hanson, *Glendora, CA*
 David Hendee, *Northfield, MN*
 Gerry Henningsen, *Monument, CO*
 Glenn Henriksen, *Armstrong, IA*
 Marcia Jante, *New Berlin, WI*
 Daniel Jensen, *Columbus, OH*
 Marnie Jensen, *Nebraska City, NE*
 Elly Jorgensen, *Prairie Village, KS*
 Merlyn Knudsen, *Elk Horn, IA*
 Chris Kofoed, *West Branch, IA*
 Lars Matthiesen, *Edmonds, WA*
 Toni McLeod, *Mesa, AZ*
 Honorable Consul Karen Nielsen, *Overland, KS*
 Mike Nielsen, *Altoona, IA*

Eric Olesen, *Racine, WI*
 Kurt Rasmussen, *Johnston, IA*
 Randy Ruggaard, *Hudson, OH*
 Anders Sand, *Kansas City, MO*
 Carl Steffensen, *Houston, TX*
 Karen Suchomel, *West Branch, IA*
 Carol Svendsen, *Denver, CO*
 Pete West, *Denver, CO*

Ex-Officio

Nils Jensen, *Portland, OR*
 Dennis Larson, *Decorah, IA*
 Dr. John Mark Nielsen, *Blair, NE, Executive Director Emeritus*

Tova Brandt, *Decorah, IA, Executive Director*

who we are

MISSION STATEMENT

The Museum of Danish America explores the Danish-American experience, the historic and modern influences of Denmark on the United States, and the continuing story of how a nation of immigrants shape American identity.

VISION

- To be the foremost Danish-American museum and cultural center in the nation.
- To be a model for ethnic heritage museums in how to remain relevant in a changing world.
- To be a showplace for Danish innovation and its importance to American progress.
- To be engaging and relevant to people both with and without Danish ancestry.
- To help visitors connect past Danish immigrants' experience with the experience of today's Danish and non-Danish immigrants to the United States.

VALUES

We are:

Inspirational: We honor the contributions of Danish-Americans to the complex fabric of American history and culture.

Innovative: We present visitors with experiences that challenge and enlighten. We experiment with new ways of engaging audiences locally, regionally, and nationally.

Authentic: Using primary sources, we tell the story of Danish immigration in all its complexity, including success and failure, accomplishment and discouragement, longing for what was left behind and hope for a new life.

Visitor-centered: We educate and entertain visitors of all backgrounds and engage them in a dialogue about American identity through the lens of the Danish immigrant experience and the influences of modern Danish society and culture.

Promoting tolerance and respect: We build appreciation for the United States as a nation of immigrants, past and present.

Focused on preservation: We collect and preserve artifacts, documents, and stories for current and future education and scholarship.

Stewards: We focus on responsible management of human, financial, and facility resources, sustaining the museum and its mission for future generations.

staff &
interns**Executive Director***Tova Brandt, M.A.***Executive Director Emeritus***John Mark Nielsen, Ph.D.***Administrative Manager***Terri Johnson***Administrative Assistant***Terri Amaral, B.A.**Cindy Pash***Albert Ravenholt Curator of
Danish-American Culture***Tova Brandt, M.A.***Associate Curator of Exhibitions***Diya Nagaraj, M.Litt.***Curator of Collections
& Registrar***Angela Stanford, M.A.***Archival Collections Manager***Cheyenne Jansdatter, M.A.***Genealogy Center Manager
& Librarian***Amanda Skellenger, M.A., M.L.I.S.***Genealogy Researcher***Wanda Sornson, M.S.***Development Manager,
Annual Report Editor***Deb Christensen Larsen***Development Associate***Shelli Larson, B.S., B.A.***Communications Specialist***Nicky Christensen, B.S.***Design Store Manager***Nan Dreher***Accounting Manager***Jennifer Winters***Building & Grounds Manager***Tim Fredericksen***Prairie Maintenance Assistant***Kiara Rodriguez, B.S.***Weekend Visitor Services***Jennifer Agnew**Justice Doherty**Beth Rasmussen**Rodger Rasmussen***Bedstemor's House Staff***Season Closed due to pandemic**Covid-19 precautions***Danish Intern***Christina Damgaard Andersen, M.A., University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark (Exhibitions)*Internships for Danes are funded through a generous grant from
Scan | Design Foundation, Seattle, WA**American Interns***Hannah Bernhard, B.S., Loras College, Dubuque, IA (Collections)*

Internship funded by the Danish Club of Tucson, AZ

Julia Jessen, M.S. Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY (Collections)

Internship funded by the Danish Club of Tucson, AZ

Heather Olsen, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (Genealogy)

Virtual Internship funded by the Danish Club of Tucson, AZ

*Kelsey Wilcoxon, B.S. & M.L.I.S., Dominican University, River Forest, IL
(Archival & Special Collections)*

Internship funded by Diane Skov, Lacey, WA

former board members

City and state indicate where board members resided *at the time of their service*; the 13 original board members are in **bold print**; deceased members are indicated with asterisks*. Every effort has been made to ensure that all the following information is accurate. Please contact Administrative Manager Terri Johnson with any questions or corrections.

Cindy Larsen Adams, Littleton, CO 2012-2018
Birgit Andersen, Ithaca, NY 2002-2005
Dennis J. Andersen, Atlanta, GA 1999-2002 & 2007-2013, *Secretary*
Ed Andersen*, Rochester, MN 1990-1996, *Vice President & President*
Erik Andersen, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 2011-2014
Herb Andersen*, Council Bluffs, IA 1991-1992
Judy Andersen*, Los Angeles, CA 1986-1989
Ragna Bak, Alexandria, VA 1997
Norman Bansen*, Blair, NE 1983-1989
Harold Berg, Ogden, IA 1996-2002
Signe Nielsen Betsinger, Falcon Heights, MN 1983-1990 & 1991-1996, *President*
Egon Bodtke, Salem, OR 2000-2006, *President*
Arvid Bollesen*, Tustin, CA 1990-1996
Jon Borgman, Harlan, IA 2010-2013
Bruce Bro, Phoenix, AZ 2018-2019
Mervin Bro*, Scottsdale, AZ 1996-1999, *Vice President*
Ronald Bro, Cedar Falls, IA 2001-2007 & 2011-2017
Timothy Burchill, Jamestown, ND 2012-2018, *Vice President & President*
Jens Busch*, Austin, TX 1990-1996
Borge M. Christensen, Tucson, AZ 2003-2006
Carlo Christensen, Glendale, CA 2004-2010
Dan Christensen, West Des Moines, IA 2013-2015
Jack Christensen*, Yankton, SD 1991-1997, *Treasurer*
Lois Christensen, Elk Horn, IA 2001-2007
Lone Christensen, Brown Deer, WI 2007-2013
Ross Christensen*, Waterloo, IA 1992-1993
Thomas Christensen*, Bettendorf, IA 1999-2005
Victor Christensen*, Washington, DC 1983-?
Marie Meilandt Dahlman*, Loma Rica, CA 1998-?
Ane-Grethe Delaney, Wayzata, MN 2006-2012
Pam Doreau* 1985-1989
Anne-Marie Douglas, Chicago, IL 1999-2005
Diane Doyle, Papillion, NE 1983-1985
Jan Eakins, Des Moines, IA 2003-2004
Bente Ellis, San Jose, CA 2013- 2019
Nick Ericksen, Omaha, NE 1991-1997
Gordon R. Esbeck, Tipton, IA 2001-2007
Cora Fagre*, Loveland, CO 1985-1991
Dorothy Stadsvold Feisel, St. Michaels, MD 2012-2018
Charles Frederiksen, Ames, IA 1989-1995 & 1997-1999, *President*
Lis Frederiksen, Washington, DC 2001-2003
Mark Frederiksen, Falcon, CO 2006-2012, *President*
Marilyn Andersen Gift, Des Moines, IA 1995-2001, *Secretary*
Karen Gray, Spring Grove, MN 1992-1995
Kenneth Gregersen, Ankeny, IA 2006-2008
Neel Halpern*, Manhasset, NY 1991-1994
Howard Hansen* 1988-1988
Ingrid Hansen*, Lincoln, NE 1994-1998
Janell Hansen, Elk Horn, IA 2007-2009
Kurt Hansen, Rosemount, MN 2008-2014
Mia Hansen, Tucson, AZ 2008-2010
Stewart Hansen, West Des Moines, IA 2011-2013
Thomas Hansen, Blair, NE 2003-2005
Thorvald Hansen*, Des Moines, IA 1983-1988
Ernst Harboe*, Northfield, IL 1991-1994
Otto Hoiberg*, Lincoln, NE 1983-1987
Anna Thomsen Holliday, Houston, TX 2008-2010 & 2012-2018
Gail G. Holmes, Omaha, NE 1983-1987, *Secretary*
William Holmquist, Long Lake, MN 2000-2003
Henrik Holmskov*, Brookfield, WI 1993-1995
Vern E. Hunter, Fargo, ND, 1999-2005, *President*
Joy M. Ibsen, Trout Creek, MI, 1999-2005, *President*
Robert E. Ibsen, Kenosha, WI 1990-1991
James Iversen, Ames, IA 1985-1991, *President*
Ellen Westergaard Jackson*, Whiting, IA 1999-2002
Kenneth Jacobsen, Seattle, WA 2011- 2013
Bill Jensen*, Urbandale, IA 2013-2014
Bridget Jensen, Houston, TX 2005-2008
Erna Jensen, Des Moines, IA 2003-2009
Harold R. Jensen*, St. Paul, MN 1983-1990, *Vice President*
Harold M. Jensen, Ames, IA 2002-2008
Lee Jensen, Pleasant Grove, UT 2000-2003
Nils Jensen, Portland, OR 2001-2004
Roland Jensen*, Des Moines, IA 1985-1993
Tor Jensen, Willmette, IL 1992-1995

- Torben Jeppesen, Odense, Denmark 1998-2003
 Kristi Planck Johnson, Bethesda, MD 2009-2015
 Margaret Johnson, Santa Clara, CA 2000-2003
 Carol Jorgensen*, Dike, IA 1996-2002
 Julie Jorgensen, Wayzata, MN 2002-2007, *Secretary*
 Lis Jorgensen, Gilroy, CA 1990-1998
Howard Juell*, Kimballton, IA 1983-1987
 Orville Juhler*, Harlan, IA 2002-2005
 Katrine Vange Keller, Wilmette, IL 1995-2001,
Secretary
 Peter G. Kelly, Glastonbury, CT 1998-2001
 Peder Kirkegaard*, Lake Geneva, WI 2006-2007
 Karen Klop* 1990-1993
 Svend Koch*, Cedar Falls, IA 1993-1999
 Christopher Kramme, San Francisco, CA 2006
 Lowell Kramme, Des Moines, IA 1993-1999
 Joseph Krentzel*, Fair Lawn, NJ 1991-1997
 Garey Knudsen, Hutchinson, MN 2012-2018,
Vice President, President
 Hugh Larsen*, Ontario, Canada 1985-1986
 Kenneth Larsen, Calistoga, CA 2009-2015, *Treasurer*
 Kurt Klarskov Larsen*, Oneonta, AL 2006-2009
 Carolyn Larson, St. Paul, MN 2013-2019, *Secretary*
 Dennis Larson, Decorah, IA 1985-*Ex-officio*
 Bent Lerno*, Simi Valley, CA 1995-2001
 Eivind Lillehoj*, Kimballton, IA 1995-2000
 Steven Lund, Yuma, AZ 2008-2011
 Marion Marzolf, Ann Arbor, MI 1985-1987
 Clark Mathisen*, Omaha, NE 1999-2005 &
 2009-2011, *Treasurer*
 Cynthia McKeen, St. Paul, MN 2008-2014
 Carol Mills, Dubuque, IA 2009-2012
 Craig Molgaard, Little Rock, AR 2013-2019
 John Molgaard*, Atlantic, IA 1996-2002 & 2005-
 2009, *Treasurer, Vice President*
 Dagmar Muthamia, Long Beach, CA 2002-2008 &
 2012-2018, *Secretary & President*
 Norma Lange Nelson*, Elk Horn, IA 1996-2002
 Clayton Nielsen*, Racine, WI 1991-?
Hans T. Nielsen*, Denver, CO 1983-1986
John Mark Nielsen, Blair, NE 1983-1991 &
 2000-2003
 Peter Nielsen, Naples, FL 2015-2016
 Ruth Herman Nielsen*, Omaha, NE 1992-1998,
Secretary
 Virginia Nielsen*, Elk Horn, IA 1989-1995
 J. Brent Norlem*, Monticello, MN 2013-2016
 Kay Esbeck North*, Ames, IA 2007-2012,
Vice President
 Mark Nussle, Palos Park, IL 2005-2011, *Vice President*
 Kai Nyby*, LaPorte, IN 2001-2007, *President*
 Benedikte Ehlers Olesen, Eugene, OR
 2004-2012
 Erik Olsen, Mesa, AZ 1995-1999
 Marian "Mittie" Ostergaard, Mission Viejo, CA
 2010-2016
 Tom Paulsen*, Bellevue, WA 1994-2000
 Curt Pedersen, Tucson, AZ 2001-2005
 Edwin Pedersen*, Luck, WI 1993-1996
 Jesper Packert Pedersen, Washington, DC 2011
 Leroy Pedersen*, Elk Horn, IA 1993-1999
 H. Rand Petersen, Harlan, IA 1985-1991
 Marc Petersen, Omaha, NE 2003-2009, *President*
 Peter Petersen*, Canyon, TX 1985-1993, *Secretary*
 Melvin Pihl*, Canby, OR 1987-1993
 Henrik Fogh Rasmussen, Springfield, IL 2010-2015
 Lynette Skow Rasmussen, Johnston, IA 2006-2012
Lisa Riggs, Elk Horn, IA 1983-1990, *Treasurer*
 Norman Riis, Ames, IA 1986-1991
 Eva Robinson, Butler, PA 2008-2010
 Tom Rosen, Fairmont, MN 1998-2001
 Anelise Sawkins, Minneapolis, MN 2002-2008
 Jerry Schrader, Elk Horn, IA 2011-2017
 Rose Grindheim Sims*, Ridge Manor, FL 1997-1999
 Linda Sloth-Gibbs, Yuma, AZ 2003-2009
 Flemming "Eric" Smitsdorff, Racine, WI 2010-2015,
Secretary
 Ole Sønnichsen, Bjert, Denmark 2015-2018
 Bob Sorensen* 1987-?
 Howard Sorensen, Elk Horn, IA 1990-1996, *Treasurer*
 Harriet Albertsen Spanel*, Bellingham, WA
 2005-2011, *President*
 Chris Steffensen*, Hoffman Estates, IL 1985-?
 Linda Steffensen, Hoffman Estates, IL 2012-2018
 Poul Steffensen*, Omaha, NE 1986-?
 Halvor H. Strandskov*, Alexandria, VA 1995-2001,
President
 Mark Strandskov, Mt. Pleasant, MI 2009-2015
 Helen Stub, Minneapolis, MN, 1991-2000, *Secretary*
 Janet Thuesen, Sausalito, CA 1996-2002 &
 2006-2012, *Vice President*
 Svend Toftemark, Eugene, OR 1994-2000
 Robert J. Wallace*, Kansas City, MO 1988-1992
 Daniel Warren, Fairmont, MN 2015-2016
Donald Watkins*, Lawrence, KS 1983-1987
 Wilber Williamson*, Des Moines, IA 1988-1995
 Lorraine Mattson Zembinski*, Elm Grove, WI
 1993-1994

Condensed Financial Statements
Years Ended August 31, 2020 and 2019

Condensed Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets - Modified Cash Basis

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Assets		
Cash and Investments	6,184,033	5,878,221
Inventory	57,413	85,544
Property and Equipment (Net)	<u>4,521,051</u>	<u>4,599,445</u>
<u>Total Assets</u>	<u>10,762,497</u>	<u>10,563,210</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accrued Payroll Taxes	0	2,552
Notes Payable	<u>124,100</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Total Liabilities</u>	124,100	2,552
Net Assets	<u>10,638,397</u>	<u>10,560,658</u>
<u>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</u>	<u>10,762,497</u>	<u>10,563,210</u>

Condensed Statement of Revenue and Support, Expenses,
and Changes in Net Assets - Modified Cash Basis for Years ended August 31,

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Support and Revenue		
Contributions and Support	841,698	1,530,447
Admissions and Program Fees	6,230	15,780
Gift Shop Revenue (Net)	47,248	59,149
Investment and Other Income	<u>606,784</u>	<u>190,250</u>
<u>Total Support and Revenue</u>	<u>1,501,960</u>	<u>1,795,626</u>
Expenses		
Program Services	911,048	903,298
Supporting Activities	<u>513,173</u>	<u>477,361</u>
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>1,424,221</u>	<u>1,380,659</u>
<u>Change in Net Assets</u>	77,739	414,967
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	<u>10,560,658</u>	<u>10,145,691</u>
<u>Net Assets - End of Year</u>	<u>10,638,397</u>	<u>10,560,658</u>

endowment

The Museum of Danish America's endowments provide the opportunity for members to perpetuate their contributions and, at the same time, help guarantee the museum's long-term financial stability. Current market value as of December 31, 2020, was \$5,563,676.87.

bequests

In 2020 the museum received \$256,080.82 in bequests, \$31,460.05 (less than 12%) has been invested in the museum's endowment funds and the balance \$224,619.97 (88%) has been or is being used for operations, special projects and programming. The Museum of Danish America gratefully acknowledges the following estates, trusts and individuals:

Erik & Anna Andersen Trust, Parkville, MO

Rita Neergaard Hansen Charitable Trust, Kenosha, WI

W. Clayton Nielsen Estate, Solvang, CA

Glenn Olsen Revocable Trust, Atlantic, IA

Irma Orum Estate, Saint Charles, IL

ARE YOU GETTING OUR EMAILS?

Let us know if you are not receiving our monthly e-newsletter. We want to be sure that we have your correct and preferred address on file.

a year of challenges and achievements

The year 2020 challenged all of us – individuals, institutions, and societies – in ways we could not have anticipated as the new year dawned. We want to acknowledge the impact that 2020 has had on the Museum of Danish America and the lessons that we will carry into the future.

CHALLENGES

- In March the museum closed its doors to the public. Staff remained working either onsite or from home, whichever fit their needs best.
- With staff working from several different locations, we had to adopt new communication tools and become Zoom experts.
- Board meetings also moved online, ensuring that the business of the museum could still be conducted.
- Before reopening in July, the museum needed to put new resources and procedures in place for social distancing, sanitizing surfaces, and adjusting visitor areas to minimize hands-on actions.
- Due to increased public health risks, the museum closed again to the public in November. As before, staff members remained fully active in keeping the museum operations and programs going.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Board of Directors approved a new Strategic Plan to guide the museum's priorities from 2021 through 2023.
- Most scheduled programs successfully shifted to online formats. Brown Bag Lunch programs have been seen by hundreds of viewers and remain available on the museum's YouTube channel.
- Museum members have continued to provide generous support, keeping the museum active and resilient as we navigated these uncertain times.
- A new exhibition, Art Nouveau Innovation: Danish Porcelain from an American Collector, opened in October to showcase a stunning array of artistic and technical masterpieces. The exhibition begins a multi-year tour in 2021.
- New staff joined the museum team, even in the midst of this atypical year. The museum has a robust and dedicated staff team in all departments.
- Improvements to the facilities and grounds include a resurfaced entry driveway, new concrete slabs for benches in the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park, and a major upgrade to the museum's HVAC system.
- The museum earned support from several publicly-funded grant programs, many funded through the federal CARES Act, which help maintain a full staff and active programs through the year.



By Tova Brandt

volunteers

One of the many challenges for museum staff this past year was closing our buildings to the public, which also meant not allowing volunteers on-site, at least for a time. The few volunteers that were able to work remotely continued to do so. When the museum re-opened in early July, Genealogy Center volunteers were allowed to return to the center, as long as the health and safety protocols we had in place were followed. It was a different story for front desk volunteers at the museum as they greet visitors from across the country and the world. In consideration of their health and welfare, we asked our volunteers to stay home beginning in March. That being said, volunteers still logged a total of **1,334 hours in 2020**.

In this annual report, I usually list all current volunteers – Genealogy Center, Museum and Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum. But it occurred to me that all volunteers through the years have had a part in bringing this museum to where it is today and we should recognize them as well. ALL volunteers are, and have been, important to the history AND future of the Museum of Danish America, whether they've given one hour or thousands of hours (some have!). Their gifts of time, energy, labor, and more have been an important contribution to the success of our accredited, national Museum of Danish America.

Following are the names of volunteers for whom we have documented hours of time, beginning in 1992. **Volunteers active in 2020 are in bold.**

Andy Andersen	Marty Boose	Lamont Christensen	Sam Dreher	June Haas
Annette Andersen	Mel Boose	Lois Jean Christensen	Clayton Ellingson	Andrea Hansen
Bertha Andersen	Janet Bornholdt	Margaret Christensen	Dean Esbeck	Barb Hansen
Delbert Andersen	Velma Boysen	Mary Ann Christensen	Jeanene Esbeck	Betty Hansen
Dennis Andersen	Mary Bro	Mary Ann Christensen	Ray Esbeck	Connie Hansen
Diane Allen	Ronald Bro	Oda Christensen	Shirley Esbeck	Dallas Hansen
Elenor Andersen	Ruthe Bocker	Orvie Christensen	Verna Esbeck	Doris Hansen
Harvey Andersen	Claire Bruce	Shirley Christensen	Martha Eskov	Eleanor Hansen
Marilyn Andersen	David Buellers	Virgil Christensen	Millie Eskov	Fred "Fritz" Hansen
Mary Ann Andersen	Roger Buhr	Alice Christiansen	Kathleen Eyeberg	Harvey Hansen
Mildred Andersen	David Burkett	Bud Clausen	William (Gene) Eyeberg	Howard Hansen
Milo Andersen	Norma Burkett	Glen Clemesen	Jan Fajen	Jacqueline Hansen
Norma Andersen	Frank Burnett	Rosa Clemesen	Cloid Farley	Laverne Hansen
Ramona Andersen	Osa Nyby Burnett	Virginia Conklin	Faye Farley	Libby Hansen
Richard Andersen	Ben Burns	Dolores Connelly	Cindy Fredricksen	Linda Hansen
Rosalie Andersen	Brent Camery	Jim Cummings	Lenore Fredriksen	Lyle Hansen
Ruth Anderson	Colleen Campbell	Judy Cummings	Ileen Furne	Margery Hansen
Harriet Becker	Harriet Campbell	Marie Dalham	Marcella Gaines	Marie Hansen
Jack Bell	Jim Chambers	Peter Dam-Hein	Esther Gearhardt	Marlene Hansen
Delia A. Benton	Hilda Chester	Eileen Denne	Bill Gift	Paul Hansen
Shirley Bierbaum	Bent Christensen	Jack Denne	Marilyn Andersen	Peggy Hansen
Emily Biles	Cliff Christensen	Anne-Marie Douglas	Gift	Priscilla Hansen
Maxine Bladt	Herb Christensen	Ellen Dreher	Doris Greve	Roland (Rollie) Hansen
Connie Boose	Howard Christensen		Evelyn Gross	Rosie Hansen
Irene Boose	Joyce Christensen			

By Terri Johnson



Tom Hansen	Verlee Johnson	Leslie Marks	Kai Nyby	Evelyn Rechtenbach
Virgil Hansen	Virginia Johnson	Grace Martens	Starr Nyby	Anna Redsand
Eileen Harris	H. John Jones	Dana McClain	Vera Nyby	Mike Riggs
Cecelia Haynes	Ron Jones	Martha McCord	Glenn Olsen	Lisa Riggs
Joy Heckman	Doris Jones	Gladys McCrory	Mary Ellen Olsen	Bill Rollins
Esther Sand	Dorothy Kelgor	Wayne McFadden	Phyllis Olsen	Merle Rounds
Henderson	Jimmie Kelgor	Julie McKeever	Duane Ortgies	Esther Rutherford
Beverly Henningsen	Anne Keller	Michele McNabb	Karolyn Ortgies	Carolyn Sand
Dorothy Henriksen	Rhoda Kelloway	Judy Meehan	Erik Høgsbro	Leroy Sand
Sue Hjelle	Mary Lowene	Elaine Michaelson	Østergaard	Kenneth Sand
Calvin Hoegh	Kempf	Lavon Mikkelsen	Bev Paulsen	Nancy Sand
Izy Hoegh	Andy Kissel	Merlin Mikkelsen	Elsie Paulsen	Judy Schroder
Janet Hoegh	Fern Kissel	Sonya Mikkelsen	Jane Paulsen	Bertha Schroeter
Ken Hoegh	Clarence Klein	Mardell Miller	Mark Paulsen	Darrell Schroeter
Mary Lou Hoegh	Frances Klein	Marlene Miller	Wayne Paulsen	Lori Schultz
Monte Hoegh	Carole Knaub	John Molgaard	Clara Pedersen	Roger Schwery
Phyllis Hoegh	Jeanette Knudsen	Merlyn Molgaard	Leroy Pedersen	Adeline Scott
Inga Hoifeldt	Merlyn Knudsen	Arlene Morgan	Marion Pedersen	Preben Sepstrup
Ralf Hoifeldt	Svend Koch	Beverly Nelson	Alice Petersen	Betty Sievers
Chet Holland	Karen Korsgaard	Bob Nelson	Annabelle Petersen	Clara Simonds
Marj Holland	Ivar Kristoffersen	Dale Nelson	Ardis Petersen	Harlan Simonds
Gert Hunt	Arlene Kroman	Delores Nelson	Ethel Petersen	Alice Simonsen
Allan Jacobsen	Evelyn Kuiken	Dick Nelson	Helen J. Petersen	Egon Simonsen
Barbara Jacobsen	Beverly Larsen	Don Nelson	Helen M. Petersen	Joyce Smith
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Audrey Jensen	Wendell Larsen	Nelson	Rosemary Petersen	Eileen Sorensen
Barbara Jensen	Diane Lawson	Shirley Nelson	Wava Petersen	Elmer Sorensen
Beulah Jensen	Steve Lawson	Beulah Nielsen	Sheiree Planck	Erik Sorensen
Don Jensen	Arlene Leistad	Clayton Nielsen	Evelyn Plumb	Howard Sorensen
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Marcella Jensen	Earl Madsen	Ruth Nielsen	Elva Rasmussen	Clark Steen
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Don Taylor
Janice Taylor
Neva Theede
JoAnn Thielen
Donna Christensen
Thomas
Irene Thomas
Rick Tighe
David Todd
Dorothy (Dusty)
Turner
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Jessie Vithem
Henry Walter
Mardell Walter
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elk horn, iowa

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planning a visit:
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exhibitions

This year, exhibitions at the Museum of Danish America have looked a little different from previous years, but nonetheless, with the generosity and support of our partners, we opened three new exhibits this year. In addition, by expanding our digital programs, we have found new and creative ways of bringing the museum to people in their homes across the globe.

Migrant was the result of a partnership with the Immigration Museum in Farum, Denmark and includes photographs by contemporary photographer Diana Velasco. It traces the history of immigrants to and from Denmark, looking at stories both past and present.

The series of works by Susanne Thea, *Snapshots: Traveling with the Poet Hans Christian Andersen*, showcased a lesser-known publication by Andersen, his travelogue from his journey across Europe and into Asia. Especially in this time when travel is severely limited, Susanne Thea's work resonated, as she herself used Google to "travel" with the poet while depicting various places, people, and events from his narrative. Support for a pending 2021 visit by the artist to Elk Horn has been provided by the Kofoed Foundation.

Perhaps the biggest opening this year was *Art Nouveau Innovation: Danish Porcelain from an American Collector*. Support for the exhibit came from The Danish Home in Croton-on-Hudson, NY, and The Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund in Seattle, WA. In addition, Renze Display in Omaha, NE was responsible for fabricating the large panels that told the story of Danish porcelain in the Art Nouveau period. The collector in question, Dr. Todd Reiser, was exceptionally generous with his time and expertise. He traveled to Elk Horn for a socially-distanced

open house, where members of the community were invited to see the exhibit, take tours of the museum and the prairie, and purchase freshly made barbeque from A-Town Smokeshack of Atlantic, IA. Although the museum had to close to the public prior to the completion of the show, a virtual tour, sponsored by The Danish Home in Croton-on-Hudson, NY, was made available for free to the public on the museum website and offered a way for our audiences across the country to enjoy the artistry and technical innovation showcased in the exhibit.

Once COVID forced the museum to close to the public, staff had to find new ways to engage with our audience by adapting our existing programs to virtual formats. One of the primary ways in which we saw our programs shift was the Brown Bag Lunch program, supported by a generous gift from the Kofoed Foundation. In years past, this has been held in person; however, with the museum closed due to the pandemic, these were instead shared on YouTube and Facebook, thus reaching the wider global community. In addition, the new formats offered the possibility of bringing in speakers who might not have otherwise been able to travel to Elk Horn through videoconferencing tools.

A major virtual offering this year was a "Collecting 101" video and live Q&A session with Dr. Todd Reiser, the collector behind *Art Nouveau Innovation*. After filming an introduction to collecting video during his visit to Elk Horn, he generously shared not only his time for a live video chat with museum members and supporters, he also offered two pieces from his personal collection as part of a raffle for those who had signed up. The first one was held in December, with 30 attendees, with a second one to be held in the new year.



By Diya Nagaraj

ON-SITE EXHIBITIONS IN 2020*Dannebrog 800*

January 2019 – May 2020

New Nordic Cuisine

June 22, 2019 – January 5, 2020

*Kings, Queens, and Commoners:**Portraits from the Museum's Permanent Collection*
September 21, 2019 – September 13, 2020*Migrant*

February 21, 2020 – May 2, 2021

Snapshots: Traveling with the Poet Hans Christian Andersen: Works by Danish Artist Susanne Thea

June 2020 – June 12, 2021

*Art Nouveau Innovation:**Danish Porcelain from an American Collector*
October 2, 2020 – January 3, 2021**TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS***New Nordic Cuisine*American Swedish Historical Museum,
Philadelphia, PA
Vesterheim: The National Norwegian-American
Museum & Folk Art School, Decorah, IA*Dannebrog 800*

Luck Public Library and Historical Museum

SPECIAL DIGITAL EVENTS*Brown Bag Lunch Series*April: Edible Plants of Iowa with Rich & Marion
PattersonMay: Islam and Immigration in Denmark with
Dr. Todd Green

July: Prairie Walk with Kiara Rodriguez

September: Technical Art History with Diya Nagaraj

October: Gallery Talk | Art Nouveau Innovation:
Danish Porcelain from an American Collector with
Dr. Todd Reiser

November: Paper Cuttings with Annette Andersen

December: Caring for the Textile Collection and the
Inventory Process with Julia Jessen*“Collecting 101”:**An Introduction to Collecting Danish Porcelain*
December 10, 2020: Live Q&A with Dr. Todd Reiser
January 13, 2021: Live Q&A with Dr. Todd Reiser

collections



Even though reduced travelling in 2020 resulted in lower numbers of artifact donations, the museum still made some important additions to the collections. From wedding clothing for both bride and groom to military uniforms from World War II, a conducting baton used by Victor Borge and cruets used at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair **01**, smoking pipes commemorating military service **02**, and a large model of an area barn built by a Danish immigrant **03**, the collection continues to be an important component in meeting the museum's mission.

As always, we thank our donors for their generosity and support in growing our collection, and for helping to fund its ongoing care and preservation.

ARTIFACT DONORS

Mary Lisa Berg, Minneapolis, MN
Jette Bender, Hoschton, GA
Family of Victor Borge, South Egremont, MA
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Jodelle Williams, Santa Barbara, CA



By Angela Stanford

danish immigrant wall of honor

The purpose of our museum, among other things, is to tell the continuing story of the Danish immigrant experience and influence. As a way of paying tribute, the Wall of Honor was established, listing the name of the immigrant, year of entering the United States, and primary place of settlement. Their stories and family histories, if available, are part of a growing repository connected with the Museum of Danish America's Genealogy Center. Listed below are the names of the immigrants placed on the museum's Wall of Honor in the year 2020:

PEDER CHRISTIAN & JACOBINA

CHRISTIANSEN (1882) (1892) Viborg, SD –
Gloria Richelieu Fiedler, Davenport, IA

CHRISTIAN C. CLAUSEN (1907) Exira, Iowa –
Nina Clausen, Exira, IA

DAGMAR KATRINA RUNGE CLAUSEN (1920)
Exira, Iowa – Nina Clausen, Exira, IA

**HANS CHRISTIAN HANSEN & BODIL MARIE
ANDERSEN HANSEN** (1922, 1922)
Montezuma, IA – Steve Ferguson, Grimes, IA

MARINUS JENSEN & OLENA SORENSEN

JENSEN (1889, 1889) Verdon, SD –
Douglas Jensen, Aberdeen, SD

PETER KNUDSEN (1913) Jacksonville, IA – Garey
& Sherry Knudsen, Hutchinson, MN, Tom &
Phyllis Tucker, Corydon, IN, and Dennis & Sharon
Littlejohn, Des Moines, IA

TAGE ANDREAS LAURSEN (1915) Omaha, NE –
Eric Laursen and Thomas Laursen Charlemont, MA

AXEL THEODOR SKELBECK (1923) Omaha, NE
– Bradley R. Sauter, Sheridan IN

PEDER NIELSEN PEDERSEN VIXO & ANNA

KATRINE FRANDBEN VIXO (1907, 1907)
Powers Lake, North Dakota – Sharon Vixo,
Jamestown, ND

By Deb Christensen Larsen



genealogy center

Due to the restrictions COVID-19 caused, year 2020 was a rather slow one for the Genealogy Center. We were closed for the majority of the year, so we only welcomed 72 visitors, mainly from Iowa and the Midwest, though we did have a few from Florida and a couple from New York.

The small backlog of research projects that were carried over from 2019 were worked on and we were caught up early in the year. What was carried over into 2021 was what was being currently worked on. Genealogy staff completed 24 research projects, which were received from all over the country. These research projects were complex and in-depth, so they did take quite a bit of effort and time and resulted in some very interesting family histories. There were also 25 translation projects completed for the year. The number of overall projects was low and we believe it's another side effect of the strains COVID-19 has put on people and finances.

Because the number of projects to be completed was low, everyone has been working on updating the existing immigrant files. The genealogy staff and volunteers added 48 new files to our immigrant database, and updated or augmented 249 files. For the already established files, this includes finding birth and death documents as well as ensuring there are documents in the file verifying the identity of the immigrant and his/her family members.

Genealogy Center volunteers have donated over 1,027 hours to improve the Genealogy Center's resources, update files, and assist with projects. The number of hours they contributed are pretty impressive

considering they couldn't come for half of the year, so we are very thankful for what they accomplished.

We are starting to explore more outreach and services through digital means, which is also a focus of our new strategic plan. In 2020, a remote summer internship program was developed, opening up the possibilities of having more interns in the future. In fall, a genealogy Facebook group was created to interact with those interested in Danish genealogy and what we do. Finally, we took part in the National Nordic Museum's inaugural Virtual Nordic Genealogy Conference by creating an informational session that focused on our Genealogy Center and how we research. Last check, on January 14, there were 43 views on the video.

In these first few weeks of January, we've already had an inquiry to do a collaborative research session via Zoom, which will be the first remote session we've done. I think it's a great first step into exploring our options for offering digital services like this and working towards the new strategic plan goal.

Finally, a very special thank you to Wanda Sornson, for training me in the duties of Genealogy Center Manager and Cheyenne Jansdatter for helping teach how to complete the accessioning and cataloging of materials for the collection.

We look forward to what this 2021 will bring to our Genealogy Center. We know we couldn't do it without the generous support of patrons, donors, and volunteers.



By Amanda Skellenger

**In 2020 we received and/or processed donations
from the following individuals and institutions:**

Andy Andersen, St. Johns, FL
Elaine K. Bakke, Savage, MN
Rikke Borge, South Egremont, MA
Robin Borglum Carter, Corpus Christi, TX
Borge M. Christensen, Rochester, MN
Danish American Archive & Library, Blair, NE
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #6, Omaha, NE
Hannah Dietz, Lindale, TX
Larry & Janis Fajen, Elk Horn, IA
Gloria Fiedler, Davenport, IA
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merit of
recognition

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OF FRIENDS AND MEMBERS WHO HAVE
DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES THROUGH
OUTSTANDING SUPPORT, BOTH WHILE LIVING
AND IN THEIR ESTATE PLANS. THESE GROUPS
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AND HERITAGE BUILDERS.

lifetime legacy giving

Recognition includes five categories of giving. In alphabetical order, this reflects cumulative giving of \$25,000 and more from individuals or their estates, foundations, trusts, and organizations. These names are inscribed on a large plaque at the entrance of the museum.

During the calendar year of 2020, the Board of Directors was pleased to add the names of
Erik & Anna Andersen Trust, Parkville, MO (*Silver*)
Richard Lee and Rosalie Larsen Andersen, Harlan, Iowa (*Bronze*)
David & Polly Hendee, Omaha, NE (*Bronze*)
Garey and Sherry Knudsen, Hutchinson, Minnesota (*Bronze*)
Marilyn J. (Nelson) Meyer, Everly, IA (*Bronze*)
The Ørum-Keller Family, Illinois (*Bronze*)

And in addition, we acknowledge this donor having achieved a new level of lifetime giving:
Erik & Eva Andersen, Croton-on-Hudson, NY (*Silver*)
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the heritage builders

Over the past 37 years, the Museum of Danish America has accomplished much because of special friends and members who have provided for the museum in their estate plans. During 2020 **one** new Heritage Builder plaque was added to the recognition board, and the couple's names are indicated in bold. With their permission while living or with the permission of their estate's executor, the 119 names of **Heritage Builders** are permanently inscribed on a plaque at the entrance to the museum. An asterisk* marks Heritage Builders who are deceased.

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 Anonymous (3)*
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special appeals

During the course of each year, the Museum of Danish America invites its supporters to make contributions to special projects and restricted funds. The individuals, organizations, or foundations listed below contributed to these appeals in 2020 (and reflected in the Honor Roll of Contributors). *Donors to the Summer Appeal and End-of-Year Appeal are included in the Honor Roll of Contributors.*

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Zoom service annual cost

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Slat wall acrylic display shelves

Jon Frega & Elly Jorgensen, Prairie Village, KS

Exhibitions and Programs

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Genealogy Center

3 Computer station upgrades

Audrey Kofoed Foundation, West Branch, IA



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memorials

The Museum of Danish America is the grateful recipient of gifts made in memory of deceased friends and relatives.

Shirley Acker
Dorothea Pederson Adams-Haring,
my grandmother
Anton & Kristine Andersen
Charles Andersen
John Andersen
Richard L. Andersen
Lois Andersen, my sister
John B. Anderson
Rev. Virgil Anderson, my father,
and Tim V. Anderson, my brother
Ardys Askelson, in recognition of
our shared Danish heritage
Niels Baade, whose parents
emigrated to USA
Gay Bannister
The life of Gay J. Bannister
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Judy Bornholdt
Charles E. R. Boye
Charlie Brehm, my husband
Astrid Andersen Brewer
Robert W. Brown
Robert (Bob) Brown, my father
Cecily Castenskiold
Jimmy Christensen
Joyce Christensen
Joyce Christensen, a very sweet lady
with a wicked sense of humor
Joyce Christensen, my loving
mother always with a smile
Joyce LaVonne Christensen
Nels Madsen Christensen
T. K. Christensen
Virgil & Joyce Christensen, a
daughter's loving parents
Lotte Christensen, my wife

John (Jack) Christensen, our uncle
Raymond Christensen, Rosemount,
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Hans & Mathilde Farstrup
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Howard Peter Fauerby
Nels Peter Frandsen, emigrated to
U.S. 1892
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Hannah Friis, Sherry's grandmother
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Rosa Jorgensen, for care of her
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Nels Jorgensen, Hendricks, MN
Nels Jorgensen, my brother
Tage Ketelsen
Aase Vibeke Kiehn
Otto & Valborg Kiertzner
Esther Knudsen's family and parents
Svend Koch
Richard Kramme, my husband
John Kristensen
Shirley J. Kuhlman, longtime
member & former officer for
Denver Danes
Helen & Paul Larsen
Kurt Klarskov Larsen
Kurt Klarskov Larsen, my husband
Paul M. & Johanne Larsen
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Harald & Margaret Madsen	Lone Hindsgaul Paxton	Lyle V. Schjodt, our nephew
Margaret Magnan, a member of the Red River Danes for many years	Anna M. Pedersen	Brent Schou
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Valborg Henriksen McKinzie	Paul & Lily Pedersen	Charlotte Silverstein-Cohen, my beloved sister
Elsie Rasmussen McNabb	Deone Pedersen, my daughter	Orin Simon
Marilyn Meyer's four Danish grandparents	A. Stenvald & Ida Pedersen, my parents	Axel & Rose Skelbeck
Laina Molbak	Walter Nielsen & Else Pedersen, my parents	Harold C. Skow and Christian A. Skow
Jimmy Molgaard	David Pedersen, my son	Jens Sorensen
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J. Brent Norlem, legendary professor at SCSU	Christian Jessen Refshauge and Anna Marie Andreasen Refshauge	
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James Brent Norlem, my undergraduate university advisor and mentor	Andrew & Rosa Rosenkild	
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Ole & Marie Olsen	Robert Rubel (Bonnesen Family)	
Ole & Marie Olsen, my parents		

in honor

The Museum of Danish America receives many contributions as gifts to honor beloved family members and friends on special occasions. In 2020 the following people, places or organizations were honored:

All health care workers
Major General John B. Anderson,
USMA '14, Parkersburg, IA
Tova Brandt
Tova Brandt's Hygge presentation
Bruce Bro's Hiking for Danish
America
Bruce Bro, my cousin who
successfully completed his "Hike
for Danish America"
Kim Christensen
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Jensine Caspersen Clausen
Rosa Clemesen
Dania Society of Chicago's long
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The Danish Sisterhood Archive
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Dorothy Kerkhoff's family
Deb Christensen Larsen
Theodore Larsen
Joyce Larson Madison
Ann Madsen
Marilyn Meyer's four Danish
grandparents who came to
Brayton 10 miles east of Elk
Horn
Museum of Danish America's
successful continuation
Museum Staff and the Board of the
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Museum volunteers, past & present
Poul & Benedikte Ehlers Olesen
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Paul Roge
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special memberships

Throughout 2020 the Museum of Danish America attained **197** new memberships, complimentary memberships, reciprocal memberships or received contributions toward gift memberships for the following organizations or individuals/households:

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