

# museum of danish america

E-NEWS | NOVEMBER 2014



## curatorial center grand opening held

The Curatorial Center's Grand Opening was held on Saturday, October 18 at 2 p.m. The ceremony opened with a welcome by John Mark Nielsen followed by singing of "Der er et Yndigt Land (There is a Lovely Land)" and "America the Beautiful," accompanied by Board Member Kristi Planck Johnson on Victor Borge's first piano.

John Mark then shared the history of the project and the names of the donors that made it all possible. Short remarks were given by guest speakers Linda Washburn, Executive Director of the Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the Great Places Advisory Board and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs; Mardy Holst, AHTS Architects; Angela Stanford, Curator of Collections and Registrar; and Tova Brandt, Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish American Culture. Recognition of other project partners was given after the remarks.

Following the program a ribbon cutting was held in the new multimedia room by the Better Elk Horn Club and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Staff and volunteers were stationed throughout the center to greet visitors and tell them more about the functions of each space.

In addition to the tours, free admission was held for all four exhibits currently open at the museum. Celebration guests were treated to a first look of the film *Simple Gifts of Walnut Grove*, a 17-minute film by John Richard produced by the Museum of Danish America. The film features 96-year-old Walter Hansen of rural West Branch, Iowa, sharing the story of the farm that was built by his Danish immigrant father, Hans Hansen (1876-1953). The farm and its working sawmill have been lovingly maintained and preserved by Walter and his family. The film covers all seasons of life on the farm and is of breathtaking quality. The film includes a soundtrack featuring works performed by Victor Borge and the Danish String Quartet. Walter and daughters Carolyn and Lucy were in attendance for the Grand Opening.

Refreshments were enjoyed by many in the Bro Dining Room on the main level. Guests also enjoyed exploring the 11 new interpretive panels that have been installed throughout the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park and atop the green roof. In addition, the plantings for the park's Rose Meadow were also put in place in time for the festivities.

Members: Look for a full-color spread of photos from the Grand Opening in the *Winter America Letter*, courtesy of our friends at Harlan Printing.

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF WOULD LIKE TO SINCERELY THANK THE 200+ PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED FOR MAKING THE GRAND OPENING SO GRAND!**



## brown bag lunch programs

Programs begin at 12 noon in the Bro Dining Room and are FREE to the public. Bring your own lunch – we'll provide the coffee!

### November 13 | *Growing Up Bi-culturally*

Wanda Sornson grew up in the Danish-American community of Audubon, Iowa, and spent much of her career as an educator on a Navajo reservation. How do these experiences of childhood compare?

### November 20 | *Fredericia – The Capital of Denmark?*

Marianne Frøsig Sorensen is a Danish graduate intern at the museum. She will present a virtual tour of Fredericia, a planned city in Denmark with a unique history.

### December 11 | *Christmas Hygge*

Join museum staff for a celebration of Danish holiday traditions.

Videos from a few past presentations can be found on our YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/danishmuseum](http://www.youtube.com/danishmuseum). Also of interest, a video of a presentation by one of the recent speakers, Tom Lundskær-Nielsen, senior lecturer, University College London, is available at <http://kennedy.byu.edu/archive/lecture.php?id=3420>. The topic is "Not (only) for Children? A Modern View of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales."



## project grants received

We have been fortunate to receive two project-related grants from departments of the State of Iowa recently. The first grant from the Iowa Tourism Office will allow us to design and print a comprehensive brochure about the museum and our many locations, departments, and services. Currently, we do not have a brochure that fully shares information about all of our programs and activities in one convenient publication.

The second grant, from the the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts, is for the upcoming exhibit, *Photography by Diana Velasco: Two Nationalities*. The exhibit will also feature an artist-in-residency project that will involve community members and result in another exhibition to be opened in May 2015. Velasco will be in Elk Horn during Julefest to begin preparations for the new work that she's calling "Sense of Place."

## intern cooks for university of iowa museum exhibit

October 22 was the culmination of a small project that has been a cooperation between the University of Iowa Museums and the Museum of Danish America. The University of Iowa Pentacrest Museums has borrowed a *rullepølse presse* (rolled sausage press) for an exhibit set to open in January. In that regard, a person was sought to prepare the dish on camera. Danish Intern Marianne Frøsig Sørensen volunteered. From initially just being about the sausage, it evolved into a project of several different Danish and Danish-American dishes. Marianne prepared *rullepølse*, remoulade, Italian salad, cucumber salad, red cabbage, rye bread, five different kinds of open-faced sandwiches, *frikadeller* with all the fixings, and last, but not least, *æbleskiver*. (Are you hungry yet?)

Marianne was filmed preparing the different dishes in the kitchen at the intern house in Elk Horn. The films will be part of the exhibit at the University of Iowa Pentacrest Museums in Iowa City, Iowa and will also be part of the Museum of Danish America's YouTube channel. Eventually they will be shown on the screen in the new multimedia room in the lower level.





## in the galleries

***Danish Children Growing Up American*** is open until April 4 in The Kramme Gallery (mezzanine level). Organized by the [Danish American Archive & Library](#) in Blair, Nebraska, this exhibit presents photographs of Danish immigrant children at play, at school, and in all facets of early 20th century life. The photographs are accompanied by children's toys, clothing, and furniture from our collection for a celebration of childhood.

***Photography by Diana Velasco: Two Nationalities*** will open in the main floor gallery on November 28 and will be open until March 15, 2015. This exhibition presents a series of photographs exploring individuals who grew up with parents of two different nationalities – as Velasco herself did, with a Danish mother and Spanish father. The exhibition is organized by the Denmark Immigration Museum outside of Copenhagen. In addition to the Museum of Danish America, this exhibit will travel to the West Chicago Public Museum (West Chicago, IL) and the Nordic Heritage Museum (Seattle, WA).

Support for this exhibition and for an artist-in-residency with Diana Velasco comes from the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.

***Exploring Danish Happiness*** is open in the new multimedia room on the lower level until April 30. Learn more about the content of this exhibit here: <http://www.happinessresearchinstitute.com/danish-happiness-explained/4578972751>

***Across Oceans, Across Time***, our permanent exhibition on the lower and main levels, shares the story of early Danish immigrants to the United States.



## “kierkegaard” in iowa city

The exhibit *Søren Kierkegaard: The Global Dane* is on view at the Iowa City (Iowa) Public Library until November 16. This exhibit was prepared for the bicentennial of Kierkegaard's birth and explores his life and work as a theologian, philosopher and author. Kierkegaard is one of the most influential figures of the 19th century, and his influence continues to be felt around the globe.

To find more information about our traveling exhibit program or to see if one of our exhibits might be able to visit a venue near you, please contact Tova Brandt, our Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture.



## new member november

It's a **GREAT** month to become a member of the Museum of Danish America! Until November 30, we are offering **NEW** members a free month of access to View Our Collection--something normally offered at the \$100+ level. New members can join for just \$25 for their first year!

View Our Collection is our online database of artifacts, images, library records, etc. With around 37,750 records and more being added all the time, this feature is a fun way for our long-distance friends to see what we collect without having to visit us in rural Iowa. Take advantage of this offer by visiting <http://www.danishmuseum.org/new-member-november.cfm>.

## keep up with our interns

A reminder that you can see what our interns are working on through their blog at <http://danishmuseuminterns.tumblr.com/>.



## genealogy fun & games: oh those URLs!

Over the summer a number of key genealogical databases changed their web addresses and/or search templates – not necessarily improvements over the former ones. Here are some of the important ones that have changed:

- [www.libertyellisfoundation.org](http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org) - Ellis Island passenger lists
- [www.udvandrerarkivet.dk/udvandrerprotokollerne](http://www.udvandrerarkivet.dk/udvandrerprotokollerne) - Danish Police Emigration database, 1868-1908. Select language at top of page. The data you enter may appear as extremely light type in the various squares (clean spectacles required!)
- [http://ddd.dda.dk/vejlelister/soeg\\_udvandrede.asp](http://ddd.dda.dk/vejlelister/soeg_udvandrede.asp) - Vejle emigration lists, 1879-1887. Currently this page only shows up on the main ddd.dda.dk screen via the 'Other Databases in Danish' interface > Udvandrede/Vejle.
- The same holds true for Nygaard's notes on Danish families, now found at <http://ddd.dda.dk/nygaard/sogaside.asp>.

For the latest changes and an expanded list of websites we find useful, be sure to check the museum webpage under Library & Genealogy > Genealogy Links on a regular basis.

There is also a **NEW** Genealogy Center blog that you can follow for genealogy and family history-related tidbits: <http://danishmuseumgenealogy.tumblr.com>.



## pre-1916 danish brotherhood death index

A database of nearly 1,800 Danish Brotherhood lodge members who died prior to the start of the organization's monthly magazine in 1916 is now available on our webpage under Library & Genealogy > Danish Brotherhood & Sisterhood. See the webpage for information on what the actual DB membership records contain and instructions for obtaining copies of individual members' records.

## wanted: volunteers

The Genealogy Center is looking for several individuals to join the volunteer staff to do data entry and proofreading of special project databases. A familiarity with Excel and/or photo editing, an ability to pay attention to detail, and a commitment to work 3-4 hours a week are the necessary requirements. For further details contact Michele at 712.764.7008.



## visit the danish villages for julefest

Each year, the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton, Iowa celebrate the arrival of the Christmas season on the weekend following Thanksgiving. Here are the happenings hosted by the Museum of Danish America this year. [Find the flyer here.](#)

**MUSEUM** | FREE admission at 2212 Washington Street

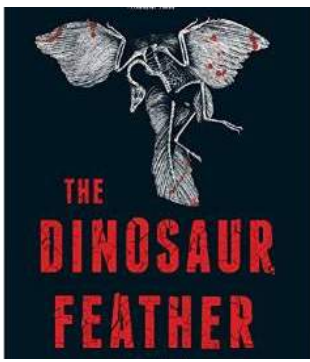
Four exhibits on three levels to explore: *Photography by Diana Velasco: Two Nationalities, Danish Children Growing Up American, Exploring Danish Happiness, Across Oceans, Across Time*, and a new film: *Simple Gifts of Walnut Grove*. Contemporary Scandinavian design in the Museum Shop, our always-popular LEGO play area, plus refreshments! Friday 9-5; Saturday 10-5; Sunday 12-5.

**BEDSTEMOR'S HOUSE** | FREE admission at 2105 College Street  
Step back in time at this 1908 "Grandmother's" home. Friday & Saturday 1-4.

**GENEALOGY CENTER** | FREE admission at 4210 Main Street

Housing a collection of family history and other background materials. Christmas activities, pebernødder and wassail on Saturday. Friday 9-5; Saturday 10-5.

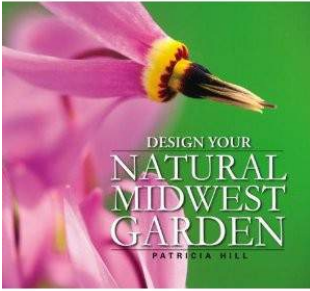




## new books in the museum shop

The pages of the annual shop catalog are ready for you and your friends and family to browse! Check it out today on [Issuu.com](http://Issuu.com)!

Two new books are available to purchase through our Museum Shop. The first is the best-selling book we mentioned in an earlier newsletter: *The Dinosaur Feather* by Danish writer Sissel-Jo Gazan. This crime mystery was anointed the “Danish Crime Novel of the Decade” by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. See what the fuss is about with your own copy for just \$15.99.



The other book comes from the heartland and is titled, *Design your Natural Midwest Garden*. The book, by award-winning garden designer Patricia Hill, is an easy-to-follow and beautifully illustrated guide to gardening with native species. There are plans and text devoted to each part of your yard, no matter the challenge. The book also features a section on Jens Jensen, the renowned Danish-American landscape architect who pioneered “the prairie school” of landscape architecture that focused attention on using native plantings to emulate natural environments. Get yours for \$29.95.

Ordering is easy by calling Joni, the Museum Shop Manager, at 800.759.9192 or e-mailing [giftshop@danishmuseum.org](mailto:giftshop@danishmuseum.org). Members receive a 10% discount.

## staff travels



Museum staff members have been visiting sites new and old on behalf of the organization. Interns have recently visited the Danish American Archive and Library in Blair, NE, the Steamboat Bertrand Museum in Desoto, NE, Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, IA, and the National Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque, IA.

Cedar Rapids, IA was a hot spot for staff travels in October. Genealogy Center Manager and Librarian Michele McNabb gave presentations in Cedar Rapids and Davenport, IA in October and also attended the Iowa Library Association meeting in Cedar Rapids the week following. Curator of Collections and Registrar (and President of the Iowa Museum Association through December) Angela Stanford attended the Iowa Museum Association Conference in Cedar Rapids just before the museum's October board meeting and the Curatorial Center Grand Opening. Also in October, Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture Tova Brandt was at Vesterheim to present a lecture on *Danish Modern: Design for Living* and to research the upcoming exhibition *Skal! Scandinavian Spirits*.

Executive Director John Mark Nielsen was recently in Minneapolis at the Danish American Center for the fall board meeting of the Danish American Heritage Society. There are six at large members and two members each representing the museum, Grand View University, and the Danish American Archive and Library. The Danish American Heritage Society is planning a Danish-American Heritage conference to be held in Chicago in October 2017.

On December 5, Nielsen, Stanford, and Genealogy Center Assistant Wanda Sornson will represent the museum at the Durham Museum's Ethnic Christmas, an annual festival in Omaha. December will also see staff members “out west” in California and Arizona. On the first weekend in December, Debra Christensen Larsen and Danish interns Nick and Marianne will attend December Nights at Balboa Park in San Diego in support of the House of Denmark. The following Saturday, Larsen and Nicky Christensen will host a Danish Christmas Open House at the Petersen House Museum in Tempe, AZ. After, they will travel to Tucson to enjoy a *julefrokost* and other holiday activities with the Danish-American groups there.

**HEADS UP:** the February board meeting will be held in **Atlanta, GA** on February 5-7! If you are in that area, keep your eyes peeled for information regarding events we may be hosting during that time.

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## visitor hours

Monday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm; Saturday 10 am – 5 pm; Sunday Noon – 5 pm

**GENEALOGY CENTER** | 4210 Main Street, PO Box 249

May – October: Tuesday-Friday 9am – 5 pm; Saturday 10 am – 4 pm

November – April: Tuesday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm

## upcoming museum events

November 13 Brown Bag Lunch: *Growing Up Biculturally*, Noon.

November 20 Brown Bag Lunch: *Fredericia – The Capital of Denmark?* Noon.

November 27 Museum closed for Thanksgiving.

November 28 *Photography by Diana Velasco: Two Nationalities* opens.

November 28-29 Julefest in the Danish Villages. Free admission.

## other upcoming danish-american & danish events

This month, we encourage you to check in with one (or both!) of the two Danish-American newspapers in the United States to receive in-depth information about what's going on in “Danish America.”

Visit [Bien](#) and/or [The Danish Pioneer](#). If you become a subscriber, tell them we sent you!