



# museum of danish america

E-NEWS | DECEMBER 2014



## julefest a great success

The Museum of Danish America, Genealogy Center, and Bedstemor's House all saw a fantastic turnout for the Danish Villages' annual Christmas celebration of Julefest. Free admission was given at all three locations, with refreshments and special activities held at both the museum and Genealogy Center.

Returning Danish intern Sofie Krogh Nielsen put together a ring toss game, "ringkastning," at the museum in addition to a special research activity for her master's program which can be seen at <http://danish-america.com/>. Photographic artist Diana Velasco gave gallery talks about her exhibit *Two Nationalities*, and many visitors filled out postcards that will be used for her next exhibit here in May 2015 called *Sense of Place*.

At the Genealogy Center, Wanda Sornson and Kate Ehrig-Page helped guests make *julehjerter* and had an exhibit about *julenissen*. They reported that the making of Danish Christmas hearts was especially popular with adults this year!

Overall, guests were welcomed from far and wide, including several from Denmark, and two tour buses came and left with many new friends. See photos from the weekend on our Facebook page at <http://bit.ly/julefest2014>.

## 'tis the season

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

Add a festive new touch to your holiday tables this year with Christmas stoneware from Sagaform. Skål Jul Bowl. Size: 10" x 5" x 2". \$12.50 Set of 3 bowls in the shape of a star, tree, and a heart. Size: 5" x 4" x 2". \$15

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





## 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!

### December 11 | *Christmas Hygge*

Join museum staff for a celebration of Danish holiday traditions. There will be gløgg, storytelling, and Danish and American carols.

**Note:** The Brown Bag Lunch Series will take a break for the winter months and will return in March. Videos from a few past presentations can be found on our YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/danishmuseum](http://www.youtube.com/danishmuseum).



## staff travels

Executive Director John Mark Nielsen, Curator of Collections and Registrar Angela Stanford, Genealogy Center Assistant Wanda Sornson, and Genealogy Center Intern Kate Ehrig-Page will participate in **The Durham Museum's Ethnic Christmas Festival** on the evening of Friday, December 5. There they will sell items from our Design Store and chat with visitors about Christmas traditions in Denmark, programs at the Museum of Danish America, and the area's Danish heritage.

Development Manager Debra Christensen Larsen and Danish Interns Marianne Frøsig Sørensen and Nick Kofod Mogensen are traveling to San Diego to participate in the House of Denmark's celebration for **December Nights at Balboa Park** on December 5 and 6. After the festival is complete, the interns will return to Elk Horn and Christensen Larsen will stay to visit members in California and Arizona on her way to Tempe where she will be joined by Development/Social Media Associate Nicky Christensen for the Petersen House Museum's Danish Christmas Open House.

The **Petersen House Museum** is an 1892 Victorian home built by one of Tempe's founders and earliest Danish residents, Niels Petersen. Friends of the Museum of Danish America are encouraged to visit the Petersen House and enjoy kringle and cider on Saturday, December 13 from 10 am to 3 pm. Christensen Larsen and Christensen will then travel to **Tucson** on Sunday to enjoy Christmas events with Danish groups in that area. After making visits in the Tucson area, the duo will return on Tuesday, December 16.

On Friday, December 12, Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture Tova Brandt, Administrative Manager Terri Johnson, Administrative Assistant Chelsea Jacobsen, and Ehrig-Page will attend the **Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs' Celebrate Iowa Gala** at the State Historical Building. Brandt has recently been elected to the State Historical Society's Board of Trustees.

Nielsen will travel to Atlanta to visit with friends of the museum and participate in the **Danish American Chamber of Commerce's Christmas Luncheon** on Saturday, December 13. **HEADS UP:** the Museum of Danish America's winter board meeting will be held in **Atlanta** 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.

## intern and genealogy blogs

A reminder that you can see what our interns are working on through their blog at <http://danishmuseuminterns.tumblr.com/>. There is also a **NEW** Genealogy Center blog that you can follow for genealogy and family history-related tidbits: <http://danishmuseumgenealogy.tumblr.com>.



## museum receives extraordinary gifts

Recently, we have received incredible and bittersweet news in the form of two unexpected bequests. On Friday, November 14, we received word from the Charles and Norma Wilson Charitable Remainder Trust that the museum will be the recipient of over \$550,000, which the Wilsons designated for investment in the Danish Immigrant Museum Endowment Fund. Norma Wilson was the daughter of Olrich and Julia (Nielsen) Larsen of rural Storm Lake, Iowa. At Iowa State University she met and married Charles Wilson. They had a very successful concrete/redi-mix business and were major benefactors in the Red Oak, Iowa community where they lived. We have had a long relationship with them as well as Norma's sister and brother-in-law, who were also long-time museum members.



The following Monday, November 17, we received a second distribution from the Marianne Festersen Trust. This bequest is a major gift in excess of \$400,000. Marianne Festersen of Omaha, Nebraska was not a museum member, but she had placed her husband, Hans, on the Wall of Honor in 1998. Hans was born in Flensburg, Germany in 1906 and in 1927, at the age of 21, his grandfather and father encouraged him to immigrate to the United States since there was little opportunity for a young man who considered himself a Dane in that part of Slesvig that remained in Germany after the plebiscite in 1920. Hans became a very successful independent CPA with Coca-Cola as one of his leading accounts. Before his death in 1997 he visited the museum and was impressed with it. Museum staff members have visited regularly with his grandson, Peter "Pete" Festersen, who is a long-time and current Omaha City Councilman.

These wonderful gifts affirm that our museum is making progress and is held in esteem by very generous members and donors. It also underscores the importance of estate planning and bequests to our institution. All of us are very grateful for these extraordinary gifts!

## 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*** is open in the main floor gallery 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 has been at the West Chicago Public Museum (West Chicago, IL) and will travel to the Nordic Heritage Museum (Seattle, WA).

***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.



## exhibit featuring danish immigrant in dubuque, iowa

*Nude Vases, Cubist Faces: Modernism at Rookwood Pottery*, an exhibition organized by the Museum of Danish America with guest curator Annemarie Sawkins, Ph.D., is on view at the Dubuque Museum of Art from December 13, 2014 through March 1, 2015.

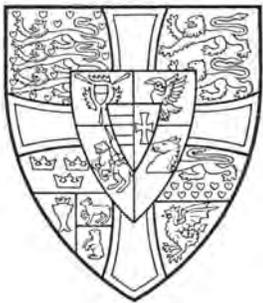
The Dubuque Museum of Art is Iowa's oldest cultural institution, established in 1874, and located in the heart of downtown Dubuque. [www.dbqart.com](http://www.dbqart.com).

### ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION

The world-renowned Rookwood Pottery Company opened in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1880. The company, marketed as "an artist's studio, not a factory," was arguably the most celebrated ceramic producer in the country because of their experimental designs and exceptionally fine glazes. One of Rookwood's more fascinating chapters and its most famous artists will be presented in this exhibition, including Jens Jensen, Elizabeth Barrett, Lorinda Epply, Sara Sax, and Harriet Wilcox.

Jens Jensen immigrated from Denmark in 1927 and took a position as a decorator at Rookwood. Whether working as a decorator of art pottery or as a painter, Jensen's unique style not only inspired his colleagues but left a legacy clearly influenced by his European roots and modern sensibilities.

The Rookwood pottery in this exhibition is on generous loan from the collection of Riley Humler and Annie Bauer. Paintings by Jens Jensen are on loan from the Phyllis Weston Gallery in Cincinnati. Support for this exhibition comes from a grant from the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.



## 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.

## celebrate advent with online calendar

For 54 years Peter Wendelboe from Denmark has created an annual multimedia calendar. For the past thirteen years, the calendar has been available online. If you don't read Danish, that's okay! You won't miss out because there are English translations. Check it out at <http://www.julen.nu>.

## visitor hours

**MUSEUM** | Monday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm; Saturday 10 am – 5 pm; Sunday Noon – 5 pm  
**GENEALOGY CENTER** | 4210 Main Street, PO Box 249 | Tuesday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm



## upcoming museum events

- December 11 Brown Bag Lunch: *Christmas Hygge*, Noon.
- December 19 Museum and Genealogy Center close at 3 p.m.
- December 24 Museum and Genealogy Center close at noon.
- December 25 Museum and Genealogy Center closed for Christmas.
- December 31 Museum and Genealogy Center close at noon.
- January 1 Museum and Genealogy Center closed for New Years.

## other upcoming danish-american & danish events

The Scandinavian Language Institute's Winter Quarter 2015 class schedule is now available at <http://www.sliseattle.com/home/classes/winter-2010>. There are at least three different levels of instruction offered for each language program at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle - Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish.

The Danish American Chamber of Commerce Georgia's Christmas Luncheon (attended by Museum of Danish America Executive Director John Mark Nielsen) will be held **December 13** from 4-11 p.m. They have planned a full night of Christmas treats, raffle, music and dancing at the Towne Lake Hills Golf Club.

Danish Christmas Open House at the Petersen House Museum in Tempe, AZ. Join Museum of Danish America staff members for kringle, cider, and a free-will donation tour of the home between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturday, **December 13**.

The Museum's Debra Christensen Larsen and Nicky Christensen will join Danes in the Desert for their julefrokost in Tucson, AZ, on **December 14** at noon at the home of Mia Hansen. Then, they will attend the Danish Club of Tucson's Christmas Party at Streams in the Desert at 5 p.m.

Akvavit Theatre's Nordic Spirit Festival 2014 features "The Sauna" by Tomas Lagermand Lundme (Denmark) on Sunday, **December 14** at 7:30PM at The Den Theatre, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago. Sponsored by The Danish Home of Chicago. There is a suggested donation of \$5. For more information about the Festival, please contact Akvavit Theatre at [info@akvavittheatre.org](mailto:info@akvavittheatre.org) or visit [www.akvavittheatre.org](http://www.akvavittheatre.org).

*100 Years of Design on the Land*, a new photographic exhibition from the Library of American Landscape History will be open at 1285 Avenue of the Americas Art Gallery in New York City from **December 15 – March 6**. The show celebrates ten historic American places— including the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House landscape designed by Danish immigrant Jens Jensen—as works of fine art and illuminates the meaning of landscape design through these examples. “Each of these places was shaped by a deliberate design process, and each has an individual story to tell. Taken together, they tell a much larger story of a nation’s beliefs and aspirations—who we are, where we long to go, or what we want to get back to,” says Robin Karson, the exhibition’s curator and executive director of LALH.

For more coming events, 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!)

# gifts for genealogists and family historians

**10% discount for museum members – join today!**

## **BOOKS**

- A New Life - \$10.00
- On Distant Shores – **Special:** \$9.95 (\$10.00 off regular price)
- Searching for Your Danish Ancestors, 2014 ed. - \$26.00
- Give Your Family a Gift That Money Can't Buy - \$7.95 (5th edition: \$10.75)
- How to be Danish - \$16.00
- Unpuzzling Your Past - \$17.00
- What Did They Do? in Danish - \$15.00
- Danish Phrasebook & Dictionary - \$13.95
- In the Presence of Forever - \$6.00 **New!**
- The Fishermen (Hans Kirk) - \$10.00
- The Day Laborers & The New Times (Hans Kirk) - \$15.00
- God tempers the Wind to the Shorn Lamb (Mogens Klitgaard) - \$7.50
- Scandinavian Descendants in the United States - \$36.50

## **FUN STUFF**

- “Danish Roots--American Branches” bumper sticker: \$4.00
- Large-scale maps of Denmark -- \$10.00
- Map: Danmark (folding) - \$10.95
- Map: Schleswig-Holstein, 1897- \$10.75
- Map: Denmark, 1898 - \$10.75
- Map: Danish settlements in the US, 1897 - \$4.00 **New!**
- Bib: “I’m the newest sprout . . .”
- Chart: “Our Family Tree” - \$14.95
- Chart: Personal growth chart w/ family tree information - \$13.95
- Quicksheet: Documenting Historical Resources - \$8.95
- Post-it Notes: Cite Your Sources - \$5.50

**Please make checks payable to: Museum of Danish America**

Contact Genealogy Center Manager and Librarian Michele McNabb  
for details about each item. [librarian@danishmuseum.org](mailto:librarian@danishmuseum.org) or (712) 764-7008.