

### Danish-American Fusion

#### 2017 Conference a Success

Danish Americans, Danish Canadians, and Danish citizens met in Schaumburg, Illinois, October 5-7, 2017, to learn about Danish-American Fusion—A Blending of Two Cultures. With a keynote speaker from Denmark, an American luncheon speaker, and the Danish Ambassador speaking at the Gala Dinner reception, everyone was all-ears as they took in all these speakers had to offer. In addition 38 conference presenters, three excursions, complimentary coffee-table books, and lots of Danish and American cuisine including *kringle*, left everyone more than satisfied. Conference planners—Julie Allen, Lynette Rasmussen, and Linda Steffensen—are to be commended for the invigorating, energizing, and informative conference sponsored by the Danish American Heritage Society.

Keynote speaker, Chef Trine Hahnemann, informed the attendees that she believes food represents a vital form of our culture; and through cooking, eating, and exchanging our stories and beliefs, we can create a better world. Through her topic—*Danish Cuisine: A Journey Through Taste and Culture*—Chef Hahnemann spoke on her love of Denmark's unique foods. The author of 6 international cookbooks and 12 for the Danish market, Trine has worked as a chef since the 1990's; and her cause or advocacy is *a decent daily meal for everybody in the world*.

Friday's luncheon speaker for the *Fusion Frukost*, Carol L. Schroeder, is the co-author along with her daughter Katrina of *Eat Smart in Denmark*. The luncheon was also a buffet filled with many Danish food favorites.

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### DAHS Celebrates 40 Years!

In the living room of Arnold and Edith Bodtger in Junction City, Oregon, in 1977, the idea of a Danish American Heritage Society took root and eventually blossomed into the DAHS of today. Meeting with friends and family—Egon Bodtger, Karen McCumsey, and Gerald Rasmussen—the Constitution and By-Laws were filed with the State of Oregon on April 15, 1977, and the first recorded board meeting took place that September.

Arnold Bodtger was the founder and first president of the Danish American Heritage Society. For ten years he also served as editor of the DAHS journal, *The Bridge*. The Society was founded to encourage research in the life, culture, and history of Danish Americans and Danish Canadians and to share this research in a journal, now in its fortieth year of publication. Today DAHS conferences, bulletins, and a website—[www.danishheritage.org](http://www.danishheritage.org)—continue to inform members and others of DAHS accomplishments.

Arnold Bodtger was also the one who encouraged the creation of a Danish American Museum in the Midwest. The Museum of Danish America is a result of those efforts. In 1998, the DAHS reorganized creating a twelve member Board of Directors including two representatives each from the Danish American Archive and Library (DAAL), Grand View University (GVU), and the Museum of Danish America (MoDA) along with six members-at-large.

Danish-American Fusion—A Blending of Two Cultures was the fifth international conference held by the DAHS.

## Conference, *continued*

Conference presenters also discussed various areas of Danish-American Fusion speaking on such topics as Storytelling—Fusing Past and Present, Preserving Danish Churches in the Midwest, The Secret to Danish Happiness, Danish American Art, Danish Spirituality, Rethinking Airport Amenities. In other words, all types of Danish American Fusion were encountered throughout the conference.

Three excursions were offered, as well. These included a visit to Midwest Groundcovers, a trip to the Danish Home in Chicago and North Park University, and tour of O & H Bakery and the Danish Brotherhood Lodge in Racine, Wisconsin.

Co-sponsors of the event—Danish American Archive and Library, Grand View University, and Museum of Danish America—were pleased with the results of this fifth international conference. At the Gala Dinner, following greetings from Jakob Andersen, Consul General of Denmark in Chicago, and comments from Ambassador Lars Gert Lose, the conference concluded with an evening of entertainment and dancing.

### ***The Bridge*: Focus on Family History**

The first issue of *The Bridge* in 2018 will focus on family history. Practical articles about genealogical resources for Danish family history will be interspersed with actual family history stories. If you have a brief (3-5 page) story about your own Danish family history that you would like to have included in this issue, please send it via e-mail to the editor of *The Bridge*, Julie Allen, at [julie\\_allen@byu.edu](mailto:julie_allen@byu.edu).

### **DAHS Board of Directors**

The DAHS Board of Directors consists of 12 members. Current DAHS Board members and officers are: John Mark Nielsen (President), David Johnson (Vice-President), Sheri Muller (Secretary), Joel Mortensen (Treasurer), Julie Allen, Ed Bladt, Christie Jensen Gehringer, Julianne Haahr, Dan Mikel, Lynette Rasmussen, Linda Steffensen, and Rasmus Thøgersen.

## Meet DAHS New Board Members

### **Ed Bladt and David Johnson**

Two new members of the Board are ready to begin working for the DAHS. Ed Bladt will serve as a member-at-large replacing Robert A. “Bob” Christiansen while David Johnson replaces Timothy “Tim” Jensen from DAAL. Both are outstanding representatives.

**Ed Bladt:** Ed has served as the US Vice President of the Rebild National Park Society and is the Delaware Valley Rebild Chapter President. Ed and his wife Bente live in New Jersey, the state where Ed was born. He is one of very few native born Americans who speak Danish which he learned during the summers of 1963 and 1966 while visiting a friend in Denmark. Joining the US Army in 1966, Ed’s knowledge of Denmark and the Danish language led the Army to station him in Denmark where he enjoyed extraterritorial status as a staff member of the American Embassy. Ed held management positions in the Army, Bell Telephone Laboratories, RCA, General Electric, Martin Marietta, and Lockheed Martin. His educational background includes a Computer Programming Management Diploma, a Degree in Business Administration from Bergen Community College, and a Bachelor’s Degree in Economic Analysis from Rutgers University.

**David Johnson:** Son of Pastor Oscar and Dody Johnson, Dave recently retired after 38 years at the helm of community mental health organizations in Lawrence, Kansas, and Des Moines, Iowa. He and his wife Michele currently reside in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Dave holds a Master of Science degree in Health Services Administration from the University of St. Francis; his undergraduate degree was from the University of Iowa. On a visit to Copenhagen, he was able to have an enlightening conversation with a shirttail relative who is a hospital administrator, and Dave would like to see the DAHS study the Danish health care system, perhaps as a topic for a future DAHS Conference. At his recent retirement, there was a tribute to Dave in the Congressional Record and another in an on-line trade magazine