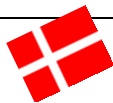


## ARCHIVE JOTTINGS

May-August 2012



### Calendar

September 28-Oct 6, the Danish Pioneer exhibit returns to the Archive.

October 1, Dagmar Vasby exhibit on display. See the next article.

October 1-5, Volunteer Week. The Archive will be open both mornings and afternoons.

**NOTICE: October 2, 2012, 3:00 p.m. Meeting of Members. Voting members are those who have donated time, material, or money in the last two years. If you cannot attend the meeting please consider sending a proxy.**

October 2, 6:30-9:00 p.m., volunteers will be calling some members. See "A Word of Thanks" article on page 7.

October 6, 8:00-10:00 a.m. Mingle & Kringle at the Archive during the Dana Alumni & Friends Homecoming event.

October 6, Dana Treasures Auction. See article on page 8.

October 8-12, Archive closed. Consider visiting or volunteering the week before in the afternoons or the following weekend.

October 13-14, Archive open 8am-5pm. Special one-time weekend hours!

October 15, regular hours resume: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-noon.

Nov 22-23, Archive closed for Thanksgiving.

December 24-26, Archive closed for Christmas.

December 31, 2012. Checks hand-delivered by noon or those postmarked the 31st will be considered 2012 donations.



## *Under the Cloud:* The Story of a Remarkable Woman

If you have time for only one book this year, then use that time to read *Under the Cloud*. This is the story of one woman's life and the qualities of courage and commitment, intuition and faith, that make it uniquely her own. At the same time it is a story of war and peace, of separation and reunion, of friendships transcending time and culture. It even has a happy ending.

This is the story of Dagmar Petersen Vasby. She was born in 1907 in Moorhead, Iowa, to Danish immigrant parents. When she was fifteen, her family moved back to Denmark to begin life anew in the old country, a process of reverse immigration that was more common than most Americans realize. Dagmar attended nursing school in Denmark and after graduation was accepted as a medical missionary to Manchuria. In 1937 the only land route from northern Europe to East Asia was on the Trans-Siberian Railway. From most perspectives, especially that of a woman, 1937 was not a promising time for a journey of this sort. This was when Stalin's purges were in full cry, and China and Japan were already at war. Dagmar was one of the last Danish missionaries to make this trip.

She had signed up for a seven-year stint, but because of World War II she could not return to Denmark until 1946. During this time Manchuria was ruled variously by Japanese, by Russian, and by both nationalist and communist Chinese armies. During those years Dagmar became fluent in Chinese and worked as nurse, teacher, and missionary to the poor, the sick, and the vulnerable. After returning to Denmark via the States she became a medical missionary once again, this time to Liberia, where she was the first nurse to serve at the Ganta Mission. During the post-war years she traveled to the USA several times, often staying with relatives and friends in Cambridge, Wisconsin. Here she met



**Dagmar as a student nurse in Denmark in 1929**

her future husband, Joe Vasby. The book closes with their wedding in 1954 and Dagmar's new role as mother to Joe's five children. The book is actually the story of only the first half of Dagmar's extraordinary life, as this year she celebrated her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday.

This book can be read as an adventure story, a kind of "perils of Dagmar," as she encounters one crisis after another during her days in Asia and Africa. Would she be jailed when the police accused her of shoplifting? Would the newborns at the orphanage survive the Manchurian winter? How would she get to Liberia after the ship's stop in Monrovia was canceled?

Dagmar is a skilled and compelling writer who was ably assisted in writing this book by Charlene Luchterhand. For most of her life Dagmar has kept detailed diaries in Danish and in English. Consequently, there is an abundance of material upon which to draw. A great deal of that material, including diaries, passports, photos, birthday and anniversary celebrations, and even a document in Chinese urging safe passage out of China at the end of the war, is in the Danish American Archive and Library. All these materials awaited Charlene Luchterhand's assistance in putting the story into a book.

*Under the Cloud* also gives us new

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Sharon Jensen—Librarian on Three Continents



Sharon Jensen is not Danish. She was not raised Lutheran. She was born and raised in far-off San Diego, where she envisioned a career in speech therapy. Yet her impact on the Danish American Archive and Library has been—and continues to be—vital. How did this come about? After graduating from high school in 1961, her mother moved the family abruptly and without warning to Blair, Nebraska. Sharon reluctantly came along, abandoning California's sun-burnt shores to enroll at Dana College. Dana, she quickly realized, was one of the few places in the US that taught Danish, a language she would never have learned in SoCal. Taking hold of this rare opportunity, she minored in Danish (reading Kierkegaard with Rev. A.V. Neve and winning an award for her translation of a Martin Nexø short story). She added minors in German, religion, and philosophy, and an all-encompassing major in history before graduating in 1965.

With graduation came an offer from the Peace Corps to serve for two years in the mild and fine climate of interior Tanzania. She taught at Hombolo Girls School in the center of the country and spent a Christmas holiday working at the Tanzania's National Archive in Dar es Salaam. Adjusting to life in Tanzania was not difficult. Peace Corps training had prepared her well for life in East Africa. Adjusting to life in the States when she returned to North America in 1967, on the other hand, proved far more difficult, for by that time the US was enmeshed in the Viet Nam war, and American culture was not at all what she had left 2½ years earlier. Life in East

Africa had been serene and predictable in comparison. If the Peace Corps had offered an extension, she would have stayed in Tanzania for two more years.

A return to the States meant graduate study in education at Northern Illinois University, grade school teaching positions in Aurora and Harvey, Illinois, marriage to Tim Jensen, and a move in 1972 to Fredericksburg, Virginia, where her two sons were born. Six years later she and her family flew on Qantas to Australia, where her husband had been offered a teaching position.

These were particularly happy days, when she was a part of the extroverted and supportive Australian culture, with parks all around, a climate to match that of San Diego, and trains and buses within easy reach of home. Sharon obtained her Graduate Diploma in Library Studies (the equivalent of an American masters) from the University of South Australia and worked as a teacher-librarian in the Adelaide suburbs of Morphett Vale and Aldgate. If the fates had not intervened, she would have stayed in Australia to the end of her days.

But in 1982 (all too soon) family matters necessitated a move back to Blair, Nebraska, which in turn made possible a return to Dana College. Within a few months of arriving in Blair she was offered a position at Dana's Library. She worked on the Hill for nearly twenty-two years, many of them as Assistant Library Director. These were also the years when the Danish American Archive and Library was rapidly expanding beyond its traditional focus on church and college and settling into new quarters in the lower level of Dana's library. These changes required that library and archive cooperate. Sharon, who by this time had worked as a teacher and a librarian on three different continents, and who still had her reading knowledge of Danish, was the natural choice to coordinate the relationship between library and archive. That minor in Danish many long years ago, seemingly the most impractical of academic choices, was now a crucial stepping stone to a new role for her and a critical role for the Archive. Who could have predicted?

During her two decades working for Dana she became the library's chief cataloger as well as the Archive's sole

cataloger. Her last day of work as a Dana employee was June 30, 2004. She returned to the library a few days later, sat at the same desk and used the same computer at which she worked for so many years, but this time as an unpaid Archive volunteer. Even though the Archive has now moved down from Dana's hill into the heart of Blair, Sharon continues to catalog all the materials (books, periodicals, diaries, letters, and more) that are donated to the Archive. Through her rigorous Australian training as a librarian, through her fluency in Danish, and her many years of experience, she—along with John W. and Jill—is the one who knows the Archive's holdings best. Whenever visitors come with seemingly impossible questions (perhaps about a parish church in southern Sjælland), it is always a comfort to know she is available and that if anyone can find an answer, she can.

Cataloging can seem to be about the recording of information, but it is actually about making connections. When Sharon adds a collection to the Archive's database, she also enters the names of people and places mentioned in that collection and the main subjects of that collection. In order to do this she takes the time to learn not just the name of a collection, but to understand its contents. Through entering this detailed information, the catalog can point the way not only to the A.M. Andersen collection, for example, but to all the places throughout the Archive's holdings where A.M. Andersen is mentioned.

Sharon's work of cross-referencing is far from complete. At this point a little over half of the Archive's collections have been entered into the database. Since new collections are added every year, and since Sharon takes care of many other tasks in the Archive, the point where the catalog is truly complete continues to recede into the future. At the same time, every year the web of relationships grows and the accessibility of the Archive's holdings to researchers, genealogists and the general public alike increases. If it were not for Sharon, this would not happen. We can only be thankful that her destiny, which had seemed to be lie in California, then in Africa, and later in Australia, turned out to be in Nebraska after all.

**Whom Do You Honor  
With Your Giving?**  
**Myrv Christopherson**  
 Senior Advisor for Advancement  
[mchristol@hotmail.com](mailto:mchristol@hotmail.com)  
 (563) 382-1939



**The Danish American Archive and Library (DAAL) could not exist without the generosity of its donors and volunteers.** The long term health of DAAL depends on current gifts of many supporters, and to gain needed stability we need to grow endowment and estate support as well.

**We got a nice surprise last month that reminded me that people not only give to people, and to glorify God, but donors also give to honor people.** I got a call recently from friends, Don and Joyce Jorgensen of Ripon, Wisconsin. Joyce (Vasby) Jorgensen and several of her siblings and spouses—Lu (Brown), Marilyn (Roum), and Philip—wanted to make a generous gift of over \$6,000 in honor of their mother, Dagmar Vasby of Cambridge, Wisconsin. Dagmar, who recently celebrated her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday, is the author of Under the Cloud, an engaging Lur Publication story of courage and service during Dagmar's years as a Danish American missionary nurse in China and Africa long before it was common or safe for a young woman to travel alone across the world by rail. (See Tim Jensen's review of Under the Cloud on page 1). How thrilled we were that Dagmar's step children decided to honor their mother in this way. Each such gift enables us to take another step toward rebuilding the DAAL endowment that was lost when Dana College closed.

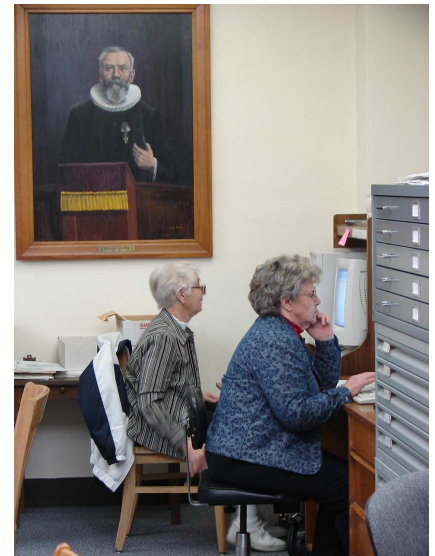
Such gifts are a wonderful way to honor a loved one. We are grateful for the many memorial gifts and others given in honor of birthdays and anniversaries or to recognize exceptional service or achievement. For example, many have made gifts out of gratitude for the leadership and dedicated service of DAAL's Director Emeritas, Dr. John W. Nielsen, and his wife, Elizabeth. Without them, there would likely be no DAAL.

**The Vasby gift got me thinking about Danish Americans that I admire or am indebted to.** I immediately thought of a family that had a significant impact on many, including me. That is the family of the late Rev. and Mrs. A.V. Neve. The Neves had five sons – Aster, Paul, Alton, Lloyd, and Ried. Alton became an accountant in Albert Lea, Minnesota, Paul a professor of Music and choral director at Dana, and the other boys became Lutheran pastors. The Neve daughters, Marilyn (Mrs. Allan Nyegaard), and Ruth (Mrs. Jack Petejan), lived out years rich in service in Oregon and Utah, respectively. Lloyd, the only surviving member, and his wife, Muriel, now reside in Blair after serving forty years as missionaries to Japan. Several DAAL collections document the lives and service of this remarkable Danish American family.

My connection to the Neve family began sixty years ago when Rev. Aster Neve and his wife, Ruth, served my home congregation, Milltown Lutheran Church which will celebrate its centennial year in 2013. They taught, mentored, and challenged me to grow in faith and learning which led to a life of service in higher education including nineteen years as President of Dana College.

Inspired by the Vasby family gift, Anne and I decided to follow their lead and make a five year pledge to the DAAL endowment on top of our monthly pledge for operating support, and to do it in honor of Aster and Ruth and the entire A.V. Neve family. We have encouraged other Neve family members and friends to consider adding their own gifts to the DAAL endowment fund with current or planned gifts. Aster and Ruth's son, David, and his wife, Julie, have already made a three year pledge.

I think it is a marvelous way to lift up Danish Americans or others worthy of your gifts. **If you are able and have friends or family members whose memory or service you would like to lift up in this way, please consider making a current gift or pledge to help secure the rich archival collections for future generations to enjoy.** Call me (563-3832-1939) or the DAAL office (402-426-7910) and we'll be happy to help direct your gift and consider how best to honor a loved one.



Eunice Neve (left) and Helga Hanson (right) enter Danish Brotherhood records into the computer under the portrait of G. B. Christiansen

## Remembering Eunice Neve

By John W. Nielsen

Sixty-seven years ago, when I as a Dana sophomore surveyed the incoming freshman girls at Dana, I did not know that I would marry one of them, Elizabeth Solevad from Watsonville, California, nor that four of the others would become life-long friends and loyal co-workers in the Archive. Those four were Joan (Jody) Andersen Sorensen, Marjorie Jorth Wahlgren, Marilyn Juul Hanson, and Eunice Petersen Neve.

Now one of them, Eunice Neve, has died. Her death, following her husband Ried's by only a few years, creates a significant gap in the ranks of the archive volunteers from the old U.E.L.C. During the years they lived in Omaha after Ried's retirement, they came to the Archive regularly. Ried sorted and alphabetized while Eunice did work coding, cataloging and entering material on the computer. Eunice's quiet, friendly manner characterized the best of archive service, and together their acquaintance with the wider circle of people of Danish descent increased their value. So we say, "Tak for alt!" We also say, "Tak" to the other four members of that freshman class as well as to all of the other volunteers who keep the Archive going.

**J.W. Nielsen  
to Speak at  
Danish Brotherhood  
State Convention  
in Omaha  
October 6, 2012  
Vennelyst Park**

**VOLUNTEERS:** 1,938 hours by 34 volunteers from Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

**VISITORS:** 73 visitors from Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Denmark and Germany.

**USERS:** 44 users from California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Ohio, Texas and Denmark.

## ACQUISITIONS:

1. Sermon notes, pastoral reports, resource brochure, call committee letter. (Donor: Richard Andersen, Sierra Vista, AZ).
2. Three funeral folders, clipping on Alfred Hansen crash. (Donor: Carole Anderson, Tekamah, NE).
3. Dana College newspaper. (Anonymous).
4. Digital photograph of Rev. Inadomi and students. (Donor: Dennis Barten, Kirkwood, MO).
5. Family tree, notes and postcards, diaries, books and papers about her work as a medical missionary in Madagascar, clippings of the McCabe-Dane Valley community. (Donor: Patricia Bentsen, Blair, NE).
6. Photos of Old Main after the fire, Dana College. (Donor: Wanda Blomker, Blair, NE).
7. Digital records of Diamond Lake Lutheran Church and Cemetery, booklet, calendar, letter. (Donors: Richard & Beverly Boyer, Woodbury, MN).
8. Two obituaries. (Donor: Becky Bryant, West Des Moines, IA).
9. Information on Peter Martin Peterson, including 3 books he authored. (Donor: Lu Brown, Blair, NE).
10. Internal Denmark travel documents, membership certificate to Danish Brotherhood Lodge 1, memorabilia from a trip to Denmark in 1930, postcards, clippings, photos. (Donor: Suzanne Choiniere, Centerville, OH).
11. Howard Jensen obituary. (Donor: Borge M. Christensen, Rochester, MN).
12. Federation of Danish Associations in Canada Directory, brochure, heritage book; annual report of the Danish Canadian National Museum Society and Danish Heritage Seminar promotional folder. (Donor: Rolf Bushcardt Christensen, Gloucester, Ontario, Canada).
13. Approximately 120 books, journals, catalogues and fact sheets. (Donors: John & Birgitte Christianson, Minneapolis, MN).
14. Laptop computer. (Donors: Myrv & Anne Christopherson, Decorah, IA).
15. Blair *Tattlers* 1925, 1927. (Donor: Bob Copperstone, Wahoo, NE).
16. Danish Church's 3rd Annual Meeting in Cedar Falls 1880, translated material from *Kirkelig Samler* 1876, autobiographical info on Jens Danielsen and Søren Madsen. (Donor: Judith Danielsen, Bruce, SD).
17. Danish Christmas seals. (Donor: The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, IA).
18. *Sjernen*. (Donor: Dannebrog Booster Club, Dannebrog, NE).
19. 1907 6-volume Danish history books. (Donor: Eleanor Dixon, Hapeville, GA).
20. 14 obituaries. (Donor: Norman Freund, Fremont, NE).
21. Printouts on Anna Hansen and Hans Nielsen. (Donor: Barbara Garrett, Blair, NE).
22. Earl Jensen's photo album 1920s-1943. (Donor: Christie Gehringer, Omaha, NE).
23. Overview of the Grand View Danish Immigrant Archives collection. (Donor: Grand View University, Des Moines, IA).
24. 2 photos from Dana 1946-1948, obituary of Norma DeKoster. (Donor: Letha Grutzik, Buena Park, CA).
25. Graduates of Exira-Elk Horn Kimballton, 65 obituaries, 10 clippings. (Donor: Fritz Hansen, Wichita, KS).
26. Brochures, booklets, photos, 1936 Dannebrog Lutheran Church Sunday School, 90 obituaries, over 150 clippings. (Donor: Sara Hansen-Walter, Blair, NE).
27. 2 obituaries. (Roger & Marilyn Hanson, Cedar Falls, IA).
28. Art Sorensen obituary. (Verlan & Helga Hanson, Blair, NE).
29. Dana Reviews, Dana yearbooks, photos, clippings, items from Ried & Eunice (Petersen) Neve's lives. (Donors: Charles & Susan Hettinger, Westminster, CO).
30. Copies of *Den Danske Pioneer* from microfilm. (Donor: Nira Horeis, Lafayette, CA).
31. Camp Carol Joy Holling newsletter regarding Lippincott building in Western Town addition. (Donor: Pat Hunsche, Blair, NE).
32. 1916 *Sangeren*. (Donor: May Jackson, Rochester Hills, MI).
33. Ebenezer Lutheran Church booklets. (Donor: Marguerite Jacobs, Culbertson, MT).
34. Lucy Wilder research material. (Donor: James Jaeger, Madison, WI).
35. St. Peter's newsletters, bulletins, annual report. Carol Jean Sorensen obituary. (Donor: Geraldine Jasan, Northfield, MN).
36. Jensen family history, article, letter. (Donors: Jack & Opal Jensen, Arlington, NE).
37. 7 obituaries. (Donor: Jane Jensen, Plainview, NE).
38. Electronic version of *From Prairie to Vicarage* by Kaj Jensen. (Donor: Kaj Jensen, Aarhus, Denmark).
39. Dana memorabilia. (Donors: Kim Jensen & Pat Jensen).
40. Photos, biographical information, essays about Pedersen/Petersen family. (Donor: Dorothy Jepson, Onawa, IA).
41. Three family *Salmebog*, *The Shape of the Future* by Paul C Johnsen, obituary/funeral folders, photo. (Donor: Joyce Johnsen, Huntington Beach, CA).
42. 2 obituaries, 1 funeral folder. (Donor: Dody Johnson, Iowa City, IA).
43. Article, photos, letter from David McCullough. (Donor: Niel Johnson, Independence, MO).
44. Books, photos, clippings, periodicals, poster, cards. Pella Lutheran Church memorabilia. (Donors: Richard & Delores Jorgensen, Poy Sippi, WI).
45. Dana College memorabilia including phonograph records; clippings on Dana alumni & faculty and the campus, letters, obituaries. (Donors: Richard & Pat Jorgensen, Blair, NE).
46. 24 issues of *Washington County Line*, complete 1908 Washington County Plat Book, unbound & matted. (Donor: Nathan Kramer, Omaha, NE).
47. Electronic records, Rolland & Kuhr families. (Donor: Denny Kuhr, Peachtree City, GA).
48. Copies of photos including Rev. Skriver S. Nielsen & parents. (Donor: Martin Kuhr, Blair, NE).
49. C.C. Rasmussen family information. (Donor: Kathy Lincoln, Fort Dodge, IA).
50. Clippings, 17 obituaries. (Donor: Frances McGee, San Leandro, CA).
51. Letter & family history of John Miller. (Donor: Richard Miller).
52. Legoland ticket, 9 calendar photos of Sylt. (Donor: Ellie Mommsen, Blair, NE).
53. Elk Horn College pictures (including after the fire), postcards, clipping, poster. Dana College yearbooks, photos. Decatur High School yearbooks. Book, letter, prints, periodical. (Donor: Vali Mussman, Fremont, NE).
54. Clippings, obituaries, material on John W.'s political involvement, Danish Brotherhood calendar. (Donors: John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen, Blair, NE).
55. Blair Historic Preservation Alliance calendars 2001-2011. (Donor: Kaj Nielsen, Blair, NE).
56. Clipping, 38 obituaries. (Donors: LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen, Racine, WI).
57. 13 obituaries. (Donors: Allan & Ruth Nyegaard, Eugene, OR).
58. Douglas Falke obituary. (Donor: Arlyce Olsen, Missouri Valley, IA).
59. Dana College memorabilia. (Donors: Jim & Sue Olsen, Blair, NE).
60. Dana College memorabilia, 1943 UELC Annual report, book, article. (Donors: David & Emily Rasmussen, Blair, NE).
61. Photograph of Rev Inadomi with Japanese students. (Donor: Irene Schmidt, Audubon, IA).
62. Information on Sophus & Mattilda Rasmussen, 13 obituaries. (Donors: Eleanor & Don Schou, Albert Lea, MN).
63. Susan Thomsen obituary. (Donor: Fern Sembach, Spencer, IA).
64. Information on William Wind, both personal and as the first president of the Danish Brotherhood. (Donors: Robert & Susan Simpson, Castle Rock, CO).
65. 11 Dana College Student Directories. (Donor: James Smith, Omaha, NE).
66. Dana College memorabilia, church anniversary booklets, bulletins, newsletters, papers, funeral bulletins, obituaries. (Donor: Martha Staby, Loveland, CO).
67. Family history in booklet, papers, photos, and letters. (Donor: Larrie Stone, Blair, NE).
68. 2 clippings, 18 obituaries. (Donor: Martha Stone, Boston, MA).
69. Clipping on the closing of St. John's church in Hooper. (Donor: Lorraine Taylor, Fremont, NE).
70. Elaine Rojem obituary. (Donor: Nancy TeSelle, Tekamah, NE).
71. Ferndale, CA pamphlets. (Donor: Dorothy Wright, Blair, NE).

## Memorials:

Melius Bollesen  
 John & Ginny Beck (Colorado Springs, CO)  
 Faye Hansen  
 Patricia Newman (Omaha, NE)  
 Norlan Hanson  
 John & Ginny Beck (Colorado Springs, CO)  
 David & Christina Ferguson (Brighton, CO)  
 Alice Hanson (Oregon, WI)  
 St Mark's Church (Aurora, CO)  
 Keith Jensen  
 Audrey Jensen (Sioux Falls, SD)  
 LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen (Racine, WI)  
 Paul C Johnsen  
 John & Ginny Beck (Colorado Springs, CO)  
 Alice Hanson (Oregon, WI)  
 Verlan & Helga Hanson (Blair, NE)  
 Michael & Jill Hennick (Blair, NE)  
 Joyce Johnsen (Huntington Beach, CA)  
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)  
 Maryann Lund (Mukilteo, WA)  
 C. Jerry Lund  
 John & Ginny Beck (Colorado Springs, CO)  
 Alice Hanson (Oregon, WI)  
 Eunice Neve  
 Myrv & Anne Christopherson (Decorah, IA)  
 Daniel Connell, Jr. (Centennial, CO)  
 Steven & Connie Winter-Eulberg (Ft Collins, CO)  
 Verlan & Helga Hanson (Blair, NE)  
 Michael & Jill Hennick (Blair, NE)  
 Lydia Hettinger (Windsor, CO)  
 Charles & Susan Hettinger (Westminster, CO)  
 Dody Johnson (Iowa City, IA)  
 Lewis & Luci LaPierre (Salina, KS)  
 Cliff & Lucy Larson (Edina, MN)  
 Deb McWhirter (Allison, IA)  
 Andrea Neve (Minneapolis, MN)  
 Loyd & Marie Neve (Omaha, NE)  
 Ruth Neve (Edina, MN)  
 Elaine Nielsen (Ankeny, IA)  
 John W & Elizabeth Nielsen (Blair, NE)  
 LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen (Blair, NE)  
 Andrew & Carrie Roquet (Middleton, WI)  
 Wayne Schwickerath (Nevada, IA)  
 Joan Sorensen (Richardson, TX)  
 Paul & Lela Neve  
 Leon & Alice Neve (St Paul, MN)  
 Loyd & Marie Neve (Omaha, NE)  
 Luella Nielsen  
 Andrea Neve (Minneapolis, MN)  
 Tom Nielsen  
 Loyd & Marie Neve (Omaha, NE)  
 David Nielsen (Winfield, KS)  
 Marilyn Nyegaard  
 Andrea Neve (Minneapolis, MN)  
 Dr. Jack & Ruth Petajan  
 Andrea Neve (Minneapolis, MN)  
 Rev. K.H. & Ruth Petersen  
 Leon & Alice Neve (St Paul, MN)  
 Milton C Petersen  
 LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen (Racine, WI)  
 Ruth Hansen Petersen  
 LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen (Racine, WI)  
 Art Sorensen  
 Erna Berthelsen (Albert Lea, MN)  
 Alice Hanson (Oregon, WI)  
 Verlan & Helga Hanson (Blair, NE)  
 Maryann Lund (Mukilteo, WA)

Harold Wright  
 Myrv & Anne Christopherson (Decorah, IA)  
**Honoraria:**  
 Birthdays: Jami Nielsen, Erik Nielsen, Eva Nielsen,  
 Tom Nielsen, Doug Wilson, Emerson Adams, John  
 Preben Nielsen  
 David Nielsen (Winfield, KS)  
 Pat Bentsen  
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)  
 Myrv & Anne Christopherson  
 Dorothy DeVasure (Sanibel, FL)  
 Ann George  
 Eric & Stephen George (Blair, NE)  
 Marilyn Hanson's 85th birthday  
 Marilyn Svendsen (Cedar Falls, IA)  
 Don & Marjorie Wahlgren (Gowrie, IA)  
 Dody Johnson's 86th birthday  
 Julianne Johnson (Columbus, OH)  
 Ezra Larsen's 90th birthday  
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)  
 Lydia & Peter Beckman (Bainbridge Island, WA)  
 Inga Larsen's 100th birthday  
 Eugene & Becky Gnuse (Arlington, NE)  
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)  
 Monday Sewing Group (Cedar Falls, IA)  
 LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen (Racine, WI)  
 John W & Elizabeth Nielsen  
 Andrea Neve (Minneapolis, MN)  
 John W Nielsen on Father's Day & birthday  
 David Nielsen (Winfield, KS)  
 LeVern Nielsen's 85th birthday  
 Marilyn Nielsen (Racine, WI)  
 Liz Nielsen's 85th birthday  
 Don & Marjorie Wahlgren (Gowrie, IA)  
 Lyn Pahl's retirement  
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)  
 Ruth Rasmussen  
 Jorm & Bodil Muller (Hillsboro, OR)  
**General Fund:**  
 Carole Anderson (Tekamah, NE)  
 R.L. Bartley (Springfield, MO)  
 Dennis Barten (Kirkwood, MO)  
 Paul Batesel (Mayville, ND)  
 Arvid Bollesen (Tustin, CA)  
 Judy Brehm (Blair, NE)  
 John & Myra Christensen (Fortuna, CA)  
 Vaughn & Clarice Christensen (Blair, NE)  
 Don Freberg (Prairie Village, KS)  
 John & Esther Grindberg (Blaine, MN)  
 Ethan & Pat Hansen (Atascadero, CA)  
 Hugh & Jane Hunt (Blair, NE)  
 Sharon Jensen (Blair, NE)  
 Chuck & Joyce Jorgensen (Blair, NE)  
 Jean Clark Kaldahl (Port Townsend, WA)  
 Paul & Beulah Larsen (Fremont, NE)  
 Harold & Barbara Laursen (Kearney, NE)  
 Johannes Laursen (Rockville Centre, NY)  
 Frances McGee (San Leandro, CA)  
 Donna Morton (La Habra, CA)  
 Jean Jaspersen-Naegle (Columbus, NE)  
 W. Clayton Nielsen (Solvang, CA)  
 Lilly Pedersen (Rockville, MD)  
 Pete & Shirley Petersen (Canyon, TX)  
 Gerald & Tamara Quirk (Savannah, GA)  
 Arvin & Joan Quist (Oak Ridge, TN)  
 Robert & Eileen Raun (Minden, NE)  
 Carrie Reed (Arlington, NE)  
 Robert & Susan Simpson (Castle Rock, CO)

Martha Staby (Loveland, CO)  
 Larrie Stone (Blair, NE)  
 Arlene Stork (Arlington, NE)  
 Eugene & Nancy TeSelle (Tekamah, NE)  
 Finn Thomsen (Aalborg, Denmark)  
 Myrna Tostenson (Pine River, WI)  
 Don & Marge Wahlgren (Gowrie, IA)  
 Leroy & Sandra Wigdahl (Blair, NE)  
**John W. & Elizabeth Solevad Nielsen Fund:**  
 Loyd & Marie Neve (Omaha, NE)  
**Endowment:**  
 In honor of Inga Larsen's 100th birthday  
 Dody Johnson  
 In memory of Aster & Ruth Neve  
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 David Neve (Des Moines, IA)  
 In memory of Dagmar Vasby  
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**The 50/100 club is a list of donors who have committed to giving at least \$50 per month to help defray monthly expenses. Our goal is 100 people committed to this cause, which will enable us to meet most of our recurring monthly expenses.**

The donations listed are only those from May-August 2012. Those received in September will be listed in the next *Jottings*.

We have not included payments for items of value (translations, research, copies, books) in the above list.

Continued from page 1

eyes to see China and Liberia, as well as Denmark and the States. She is an acute and fair-minded observer, a fair witness of places near and far. She helps us appreciate the Danish talent for celebration, the unpredictable and desperate violence of World War II, and the hospitality she encountered in Liberia. One of the most moving scenes occurs when Dagmar was arriving by ship in the US from China after the end of World War II. On board the ship were many refugees, including Jews who had traveled from Russia to Siberia to China. For all of them, and especially for Dagmar, when they passed under the Golden Gate, there were shouts of joy and tears of happiness, as "China with its wonder and its horror" was at long last in the past and she was back in the land of her birth.

She had literally traveled around the world, having now returned to the States twenty-four years after leaving it. This did not, however, mean the end of her connection with China. After a short stay in Denmark, she sought again to go to China as a missionary. Only when it was evident that the continuing conflicts



**Dagmar with Chinese young people in Fuyu, Manchuria, during World War II**

in China made that impossible did she turn to Africa. She comments that throughout her life and through all the moves, planned and unexpected, "it seems as if I was born to start things and then move on."

This observation points to another, deeper way in which this book can and should be read. This is a spiritual autobiography. It is above all the story of her rich and discerning inner life. It is the interior life that made the external odyssey possible. It shows what is doable when one steps forth in trust, knowing that one has done what can be done, and yet realizing that full



**Dagmar on a visit to a patient when she served as a nurse at Ganta Mission in Liberia in 1950**

preparation is never possible and that most events, perhaps even all events, are beyond one's own control.

Her parents modeled this way of living. Her father, Christian Petersen, sailed off to America in 1897 to get a theological education even though he did not know English. Her mother, Laura Nielsen, sold her belongings to pay for her passage to the States when her parents refused to help. When Christian and Laura some years later contemplated moving back to Denmark, they asked Dagmar and her older sister Marie to make the final decision.

There is a profoundly patient and spacious quality to Dagmar's interior life. When she was in her 20's Dagmar came down with scarlet fever, which may have been something of an occupational hazard for nurses at that time. For six weeks she was kept in isolation and allowed no visitors. Instead of chafing at this quarantine, she saw this "as a blessing in disguise," for it "gave [her] a lot of time to think and pray" about the possibility of becoming a medical missionary. Similarly, but at a much later period in her life, she writes of the months when she "had to make up [her] mind about marrying Joe." As an integral part of the process she wrote to each of Joe's children asking if they would like her to be their mother.

This inner depth was not passivity, but the source of her capacity to remain calm and centered in times of danger (which, in China, were many). Once, when visiting the orphanage at night a

guard cocked his rifle and pointed it at her, but she went ahead as "somehow I knew that he could not pull that trigger." She could act quickly and decisively when necessary. At one point during her years in China she hears a voice within telling her to give her houseboy two dollars. She resists the voice, debates with it, asks why not three dollars, then eventually gives the houseboy the two dollars (or the equivalent in yen) that he had *not* asked for. Later she learns that the houseboy needed exactly two dollars to bury his recently deceased father. It was such an inner voice that also guided her quickly and without explanation or hesitation to decide to go to Liberia.

This book is a many-faceted jewel. It is an account of life in Denmark, America, China, and Liberia during the first half of the twentieth century. It is a story of life in a war zone and an account of how one woman risked everything to follow her calling. Ultimately, it is the story of Dagmar Petersen Vasby's indomitable spirit. Read it.



**Wedding picture, Dagmar and Joe Vasby, August 23, 1954**

*Under the Cloud* by Dagmar E. Vasby with Charlene Luchterhand and reflections by Dr. Myrv Christopherson is published by Lur Publications. It is available from the Danish American Archive and Library (DAAL) or from Amazon for \$18.95. No charge for shipping when ordered from DAAL, but Nebraska residents should add 7% sales tax. Lur Publications is a subsidiary of DAAL.

*Editors note:* Dagmar chose the title because she felt so strongly that like the children of Israel in the book of Exodus she too was being led by God' directing cloud.

## Executive Director Report



Jill Hennick

When someone comes into the Archive to research the name of a relative, I start by telling them that I can't guarantee that we have any information on a specific person. Since we rely on donations, we might not have anything. But, on the other hand, if one of their relatives has donated material, we might have an entire treasure trove.

I often think how exciting it would be if a researcher discovered they were a relative of the Hansen-Mengers or the Jorgensen-Sorensens and suddenly had hundreds of boxes to give them a glimpse of their ancestors' lives.

Recently, I got a small taste of what that would be like on a personal level. Sandra Wigdahl and Nathan Kramer are upgrading the collections page on the website. Sandra is selecting samples of items from a number of the listed collections so that website viewers get an idea of what can be found in the Archive. The first collection she looked at was the Alvin & Edel Petersen collection.

Alvin Petersen was my great uncle—a brother to my grandfather Sigurd Petersen. I knew the collection existed. I knew it contained sermons and an autobiography that had some family information to supplement my

grandfather's autobiography. However, I was not aware that it contained letters written in Danish by my great grandmother that have been translated into English. What an amazing treasure! I look forward to "meeting" her through reading her letters.

This is one small example of how we strive to provide a complete picture of Danish immigrants and their experiences. We also want to document the experiences and contributions of descendants of those Danish immigrants, so please consider donating your papers, letters, diaries, business records and other materials to DAAL. Wouldn't it be wonderful for your great grandchild to "meet" you someday at the Archive?

To view the enhancements click on "Collections" on the website, [www.danishamericanarchive.com](http://www.danishamericanarchive.com).

## A Word of Thanks

Those closest to the operations of the archive know how important it is to have support from our donor friends! That's why some of our DAAL volunteers have agreed that they want to call donors they know or would like to know to thank them for their generosity. If you get such a call please know that their purpose is merely to brief you about activity at the archive and thank you for your support. If you are inclined to make another gift or pledge they will be happy to receive it, but their primary purpose is merely to let you know they appreciate your support and want you to know that it is being put to good use. If you get such a call be sure to ask the volunteer why he or she gives of his or her time to the archive. We have some pretty remarkable folks on the DAAL team and they all have stories to tell. They probably won't reach everyone, but know that all our supporters are precious and we want you to know how grateful we are for your help! If you don't hear from us on Tuesday, October 2nd, or later in the month, please feel free to contact us anytime by phone at 402-426-7910, or e-mail at [info@danishamericanarchive.com](mailto:info@danishamericanarchive.com). You may also visit our website, [www.danishamericanarchive.com](http://www.danishamericanarchive.com). We'd love to hear from you!

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Thank you for your ongoing support of the Danish American Archive and Library

## Dana Treasures Auction to be held at Dana College Homecoming



Selected items from the “Dana Treasures” will be sold at both “silent” and “live” auctions at the 2012 Dana College Homecoming celebration in Blair, Nebraska, on Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. Items will be available for inspection and “silent” auction bidding from 9:00 a.m. to noon and again from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Community Room of Blair’s YMCA located at 1278 Wilbur Street. The “live” auction will be held from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the same venue with Jack Jensen serving as auctioneer.

Items offered for auction are from the “Dana Treasures” purchased by the Museum in November 2011 through contributions by major Dana College donors. Only items that lack documentation or historic significance are being sold. Following expenses, proceeds will be divided between the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa, and the Danish American Archive and Library in Blair and be used to support the care of collections.

A complete inventory of all items offered for auction as well as pictures of those items to be sold at the “live” auction is available at [www.danishmuseum.org](http://www.danishmuseum.org). Click on the “Special Events” drop down menu and follow the links.

Bidders must be present and make payment before receiving the items on which they have successfully bid. The Museum reserves the right to set minimum bids and to withdraw items prior to the auction.

For further information, please contact either the Danish American Archive and Library (402-426-7910) or The Danish Immigrant Museum (712-764-7001).



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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