# To be, or not to be, Danes welcome all at Christmas

By Susan Thygerson-Aktary

"Tm not a Dane, but I kinda' like Danes," sald Harri Virjo, the Finnish Consul in Michigan. "The been a member of the Danes," sald Harri Virjo, the Finnish Consul in Michigan. "The been a member of the Danes," sald Harri Virjo, the Finnish Consul in Michigan. "The Was one of more been of the Danes," sald the Was one of more and the Christmas feativities at celebrating Christmas feativities at the Was of the Christmas feativities at the Was of the

from North Dakota, but my husband is from Denmark."
According to Bolette MacMullan of Birmingham, who is second vice president of the society, the group is a non-political association with the aim of promoting friendship between Denmark and the United States.

It originated, she says, "in 1912 with the idea of remembering the first Danes who immigrated to the U.S. Dr. Max Henlus of Chicago was the one who started the promotion in the U.S. Ile conferred with people in Denmark and their relatives in the U.S. One of them was my uncle, Knud Sorring of

Aaarhus, Denmark."

MacMullan said Dr. Henius, many Danes and Americans of Danish descent purchased some property in the heathered hills of Anlborg on Juliand, which became Rebild National Park, a place set saide for the annual celebration of the Fourth of July in Denmark. The park was given to King Christlan X of Denmark some years ago, and has been preserved as a permanent memorial to Danish Americans. It is also a tribute to fallen Danish-born veterans of World War I.

of World War I.

ENCOURAGED BY Dr. Henlus,
Danish Americans contributed the
funds and one log from each state in
the nation to create a replica of Lincoln's log cabin on the Rebild Hills,
which was dedicated in 1934 as a permanent museum in which items of everyr state, including schooners and paintings, are stored, according to Mrs.
MancMullan. This year marked the 50th
anniversary of the museum.
An article by Nobel Prize winner
Johannes V. Jensen, written in 1927,
says the first celebration of the Fourth
of July at Rebild took place in 1911.
'Sceing the thousands of Danes and
Americans who have met here for the
occasion is an impressive and moving
sight,' wrote Jensen.

ONE WHO IS looking forward to attending the Rebild festival someday is
Olal Kroneman III, a kidney specialist
at Beaumont Hospital. Kroneman said
he finds the society events "a good environment to reharvest our heritage
and meet with fellow Vikings."
Speaking of the Rebild celebration,
he added, "It's a place where they sing
the Danish songs and keep alive our
heritage. It's also the only country in
the world that celebrates our independence."

Kroneman's father, Olaf Kroneman II of Birmingham, who is first vice president of the society's local chapter, and the society is local chapter, and the society of the society is so much is that there was a place set aside to honor our country by another country. It makes you kind of proud of your Danish heritage and of the Danish people. I'we been to the Rebild celebration. It was unique, excitigu, unusual!" His son added, "and how proud it makes you to hear the 'Star Spangled Banner' played in another iand!" Described by Olaf Knoeman as 'an old man with a gleam in his eye." the sealor member of Detrit's Rebild Scallow Demark's heal has born in Kskelskor. Demark's heal has born in Kskelskor. Demark's heal has born in Kskelskor. Demark's heal has born in Skaelskor. Demark's heal has born in the segment of Demark during the German occupation. So, we're the old timers in this group. Karl and I were here in the beginning. Sunday noon is a niee time to come here, but we have other occasions, too."

ON THIS particular occasion, with bottles of Aquavit cooling in ice on each of the round, linen-covered tables, memories of previous Christmas cele-brations were popular topics.

Heriuf Iversen of Union Lake is president of the local chapter. He exident of the local chapter. He explained, "We still celebrate on Christmas Eve, called Juleaften in Denmark, at my house." His words indicated that some traditions are still alive and well.

Mrs. Rigmor Cuolahan of Northville is president of the Danish Sisterhood in America, Lodge 125. "We still bake all our cookies from scratch a couple of weeks before Christmas and put them in tins until Christmas Eve.

'Both my grandparents lived in Denmark, so we went back every year. Unlike here, there was no hint of Christmas before Christmas Eye in Denmark. That's the part that amazed

> — Gerta Raffaeile. Birmingham

"In my home on Christmas Eve we'd all join hands around the tree, which always had garlands of flags streaming down, and sing carols while walking around it. The tree would be dark until we got to a verse that said 'Mother light the tree and don't leave a corner dark,' and then my mother would do just that.

"A pig in the pudding means the promise of a fat future, or a prosperous new year. In our family we used a star in the window which we lit to let people know when we were receiving company.

"For dinner we eat duck or goose, but always stuffed with prunes and ap-ples. Red cabbage is a common food with duck at Christmastime and is of-ten served with carmelized brown po-tatoes," she added.

"THE CHRISTMASES In Denmark, I really remember," said Gerta Raffelle of Birmingham while she handed a hot cup of glogg to a guest. "Both my grandparents lived in Denmark, so we went back every year."

went back every year."

Today Mrs. Raffaelle is the secretary of the local Rebild chapter. She has vivid memories of those Christmas celebrations. "Unlike here there was no bint of Christmas before Christmas Eve in Denmark. That's the part that amazed me. We would go to church first and then we'd come home and have a big dinner that always included rice pudding. They'd put a marzipan pig in it for the youngest to find, so they would get an extra present.

"After dinner we would open our

"After dinner we would open our presents in front of the Christmas tree with Julenissen (little elf figurines) all around it," she said, gesturing toward

the punch bowl surrounded by little

The figurines are used, she ex-lained, because "We don't believe in anta. Then we would dance around the Christmas tree.

"On Christmas morning we'd get up and put our flag outside, which meant we were open for guests. Then, we'd take our flag down and we'd go look for flags. This continues until New Year's.

"My grandmother always served glogg and Christmas cookies or Danish pastries. We had candles, Jags, and heart-shaped baskets on the tree, which were illled with candy and nuis, and which visiting children would take with them. We would always sing 'Hojt pun troets gronne top.'"

Such songs could be heard from time to time at this year's gathering, the volces rising above the open-face sandwiches made of turkey and beets, or liver with red cabbage, and while the bottles of Aalborg Akavit were passed around the tables.

passed around the tables.

"There are a lot of Danes in Dearborn," said Ruth Agbay, president of the National Committee, "who we would like to come out for our activities. We'd like to encourage Scandinavians throughout the Detroit area to help perpetuate our culture.

Anyone interested in learning more about clubs and societies located in the metropolitan area should contact the Danish Club in Detroit at 532-2780.

#### volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bu-reau (OCVB) has a current file of vol-unteer opportunities for more than 200 agencies. Non-profit organizations needing assistance may list with the bu-reau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings, call the bureau at 642-7272.

HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS — Numerous volunteers are needed by St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Pontiac, in several areas: gift shop, to sell and work with stock; nurses station, to assist nursing staff; patient guide/escort service, to direct visitors,

escort patients; car seat rental program, to instruct parents in use of safety seats; emergency, to transport patients, run errands. Needed four hours a week, same day and time. Should be at least 18 years old. Phone 642-7272.

FUND-RAISER: — West Bloomfield Youth Assistance needs an individual 18 or older, Interested in creating and executing fund board meeting, third Trusday, 1-3 p.m., and help plan and carry out campaign. \*So needed is a public relations person to publicize fund-raiser. \*Psone 642-7272. FUND-RAISER: - West Bloomfield

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ACTIVITIES AIDE: — Southfield Rehabilitiation Center needs friendly, outgoing and responsible persons to assist /supervise clderly patients during activities time. Knowledge of arts and crafts helpful. Weekdays 2 to 5 p.m., Monday 8.30 to 8 p.m. or Saturday 9 to noon. Phone 642-7272.

CRISIS INTERVENTION — Persons in Madison Heights area are needed by the Madison Heights Police Department to work with victims of crime or traumatic events following 25 hours of instruction. Instruction of 25 hours. Phone 642-7272.

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109×84 1W	404.00	13120	333.00	10877	292.00	9400	281.00	2111
87x84 2W	324.00	10510	267.00	867	235.00	7611	226.00	73*
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