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Christmas is just around the corner.

The Feast of The Hearths, as Christmas is often called in Denmark, is not only about the small interwoven paper hearts that is used to decorate the Christmas tree.

It’s also about the tradition of warm relations and of giving to the poor and needy. Nobody should suffer during Christmas Time. Neither man nor beast. That’s an age old Danish tradition.

As reflected in this issue of Dan Biz the Danish hearths in Singapore are still tuned in to this way of approaching life as demonstrated full scale during the countdown to Christmas. During a few weeks of November the Danish community at large collected around 40.000 SGD to various charities and projects for people in need.

We in DABS are of course proud of being able to transform our very first charity ball into a huge donation to the Scandinavian Women’s Association in Singapore. The money will be used for local scholarships, to families in dire straits and young girls in trouble.

Besides the Danish Seaman’s Church managed to collect a large amount of money earmarked for the victims of the typhoon in the Philippines - through the annual Christmas bazar, through individual donations and through smaller looser organizations like the Danish soccer team Vikings. Also here DABS was present.

Shortly many in the community are heading for colder shores to celebrate Christmas. However many stay behind in the country they consider their home. No matter if Danes are grounded in cold Scandinavia close to the Polar circle or hot Singapore a whisker from Equator, they have shown that when it’s crunch time they are there when their fellow human beings need a hand, being it in the Philippines or in Singapore.

That’s part of the Danish Christmas tradition – but also a Danish way of approaching the world.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Jan Lund
Editor
As the year draws to a close I want to wish you all a happy holiday time.

The year has passed yet again so fast. As always this time of the year is a good time to take stock of what we have done in the year gone by. We can conclude that DABS has had another busy year with a wealth of activities.

The Annual DABS Gala Ball also turned out to be a huge success, where we decided to use the event as a charity for needy Singaporeans. We have teamed up with SWA for dispersing the funds, making sure the money reach the right people. They have a strong track record in this field, and I am very pleased we could raise a substantial amount for this cause.

I will also like thank Stine Martinussen, Sara Skelbæk from the Embassy and the rest of the Ball Committee for outstanding work. The event was fantastic. The Pan Pacific Hotel was a new and refreshing kick. Again this year we saw a very strong interest from our members and I will like to thank all the participants for turning out in force and making it a Ball to remember.

The year has been very active with many interesting events such as company visits, interesting speakers and an event welcoming newcomers to Singapore. It is fair to say the recent trip to Malaysia visiting United Plantations was a mind blowing excursion. Not only was the trip a great success in terms of planning from Mr. Jan Lund and Sara Skelbæk, but also the fact that our friends in Malaysia welcomed and hosted us with great hospitality added to the delight.

I sincerely will like to thank Carl and Martin Bek-Nielsen for spending a whole Saturday with us. It was really impressive to see the work, research and high level of professionalism from al the staff that goes into making palm oil cultivation a responsible business. The hospitality at the United Plantation was some of the best I ever has experienced, so on behalf of all the participants and DABS, I will like to say a BIG THANK YOU.

Also a big THANK YOU to all the speakers, helpers and facilitators for the past year - and to all the companies who have opened their doors for us. You have not only opened your doors, but you have made some fantastic insides to DABS and our members. This has been extraordinary and we from DABS are extremely pleased to have you as members and contributors, putting DABS in the position where we want to be for our work and members.

When the Haiyan Typhoon made a devastating trail in the Philippines, yet again the Danish community here showed great moral and willingness to help the people in need in the devastated areas. Through a coordinated effort through the Danish Seaman’s Church in Singapore, we raised more than 20,000.00 Singapore Dollars. DABS proudly contributed more than 5,000.00 Singapore Dollars. In the DABS committee we are really proud of the Danes here showing this kind of commitment to people in need. Well done to all involved!

I wish all of our members, sponsors, friends and associates a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May you all enjoy this festive season in good company with family and friends, wherever you will be celebrating this year’s festive times.

Thank you so much to everyone for your support in the year gone by. We hope to see you all back in 2014 for some new unique DABS events. We have a busy and very interesting 2014 year lined up. Please follow our activities on www.dabs-singapore.com and DABS on Facebook.

Yours faithfully
Henrik Ziegler
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8 Shenton Way #16-01 AXA Tower Singapore 068811
The city has taken on its traditionally colourful Christmas decorations and very soon we can close the books of 2013. The last quarter of the year has been as interesting as the rest of the year.

Culture in Singapore has increased in importance and activities over the last couple of years. It has seen an impressive jump of 47% from 2011 to 2012 in the number of companies working within the culture industry - mostly music and visual arts, but also literature.

There is thus quite an interest in cultural inputs from Denmark, and the Embassy has supported a few activities.

In November, the Danish novelist Christian Jungersen, published in more than 20 countries, participated in the Singapore Writers Festival. His latest novel, You Disappear, was on the Danish bestseller list for fiction for more than a year and will soon be out in the US. Christian Jungersen gave his very personal aspects on Nordic fiction, life as a writer, inspiration, methods etc.

Also on the music scene, Denmark has been present with the Danish innovative pop music group Mew as one of the main attractions at a music festival at Gardens by the Bay. The Danish a cappella group Basix also visited Singapore and took the audience by storm both at public and more private performances.

Cooperation within education has also been further strengthened with the signing of a MoU between ITE Polytechnic and Aalborg Technical University. Hopefully this will lead both to exchange of teachers and students.

Within shipping a strong partnership was affirmed with the namegiving of the third Triple-E containership Mary Maersk in Singapore. The Lady Sponsor was Ms Ho Ching, CEO of Temasek. CEO Niels Smedegaard underlined in his speech just how important Singapore is to AP Møller Mærsk who considers Singapore “our second home”.

In November the typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines and destroyed the livelihood of millions of people. Very quickly the initiative “Let’s make a difference” was established by the Danish Seamen’s Church with the support of Scandinavian Women’s Association, Singapore Vikings football, Danish Business Association of Singapore, Danish Supplementary School, Danish in Singapore and the Danish Embassy in Singapore.

To me this initiative was much more than just collecting money for a good purpose. It symbolised that when we join forces we can reach further and wider and have more impact than if we only work on our own. It also simply emphasized how rewarding it is to do something for others and how many people here in Singapore are ready to do that. The legendary Danish Christmas Bazar at the Seamen’s Church is a vibrant example of this. A big thank you to all the volunteers.

Giving was also the overall purpose of this year’s DABS Ball. On top of getting people together for a wonderful social event the guests and sponsors also generously assured that a large check will be passed on to Scandinavian Women’s Association in support of their charity work. Thank you to DABS.

Lastly I just want to mention that the outsourcing of visa application handling to VFS Global went well. Our customers are very satisfied with the short processing time of 3 days and it is our goal to keep this high service standard also during the peak season.

Personally and on behalf of colleagues at the Danish Embassy in Singapore, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2014.

Please note that the Ministry and all Embassies are closed from 24 December to 1 January 2014.

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First sold out were the white potatoes in the glass bottles. Later on the shelves fast became empty for all the goodies that Danes - and actually a lot of other nationalities - love to inhale when Christmas is approaching.

The traditional Christmas Bazar at the Danish Seaman’s Church saw more people than ever passing the gates to the beautiful decorated building at Pender Road. It was the second year running that the bazar was held over two days, both Saturday and Sunday, and this year it had got an extra dimension.

Usually all the proceedings are going to fund the church and activities during the year. This year it was decided that the entire entrance fee would be donated to the victims of the typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Normally the fee is a symbolic 1 SGD pr. head. This year it was decided that the fee would be voluntarily and at the discretion of each individual.

To call it a success would be at great understatement. The approximately 1760 visitors - 20 pct. more than last year - passing through the gates left 12.860 SGD in the collecting boxes. All goes to the relief effort. Together with other donations through the church, through the Danish soccer team...
The Vikings and through DABS the amount shipped to the Philippines from the Danish community in Singapore will be around 20,000 SGD (90,000 DKr.)

As usual the Christmas Bazar was not only about securing all the goodies for the Christmas countdown, the advent Sundays, the decorations in the homes, the luncheons and traditional celebrations on Christmas Eve for the people staying in town through the holidays. It was also as usual a weekend for coziness, meeting friends and fellow countrymen/women and enjoying the famous Danish Smørrebrød (Open sandwiches), maybe supported by a small aquavit, a beer, a cup of freshly brewed coffee - and out course finishing with a portion the most traditional of all the Danish Christmas food: The cream boiled sticky rice with almonds, vanilla and cherry sauce called risalamande.

All of that thanks to around 70 volunteers, including Julemanden (Santa Claus), who took time off from a busy schedule to travel all the way from Greenland to Equator to meet the Danish kids in Singapore. Those volunteers are the backbone of the event. All spent a lot of time and energy preparing and executing one of the annual highlights in the Danish community in Singapore.

www.dkchurch.com
Danish writers, novelists and authors are becoming more and more internationally recognized.

The recent successes of Danish Television series - not at least in the crimi genre - have brought attention to the underlying structure behind the productions. More and more writers are getting their already published works translated and more and more publishing houses are signing contracts with foreign publishing houses for their new or old Danish star writers to be published abroad.

In a way Denmark has always been there - to some extent. But it has been a few selected authors becoming huge international names. Now the more common scene is also going abroad representing a much broader base.

During the last 150 years some Danish names have become familiar in bookshelves and libraries. In the section for fairytales of course Hans Christian Andersen, who is translated into most global languages and is a household name among children and adults from all over.

In philosophy can be found a maybe not so common name in the broad public but probably the most influential Danish philosopher, author and critic Søren Kierkegaard - a contemporary with Andersen in the mid-19th century but in many ways his direct opposition. Kierkegaard is somewhat underestimated on the home front but a big, big name at universities all over the planet, recognized as the first real existentialist.

In the 20th century three Danes have received the Nobel Prize in literature. Johannes V. Jensen got it in 1944 and back in 1917 it was shared among Karl Adolph Gjellerup and Henrik Pontoppidan.

However the most famous Danish writer from that era was Karen Blixen alias Isak Dinesen. She was shortlisted for the Nobel price several times but for various reasons never came out on top. She got a huge revival when her book Out of Africa from 1937 was transformed into a movie in 1985 starring Meryl Streep and Robert Redford. Out of Africa won no less than seven Academy Awards. Later her short story Babette’s Feast became the first Danish movie to win an Oscar for best foreign language film created by Danish director and screenwriter Gabriel Axel.

In the 1990s Peter Høeg got a smash hit and established himself at the international level with Miss Smilla’s Feeling For Snow, which also was transformed to a movie starring Julia Ormond and directed by Danish instructor Bille August.

According to statistics from the Danish
Ministry of culture's 394 Danish titles were sold to foreign countries for translation in the year 2012. That was a raise of close to 9 pct. compared to 2011.

On the brink of the annual Book Forum in Copenhagen foreign rights manager, Nya Guldberg from the publishing house Politikens Forlag explained to the daily Jyllands-Posten that the crime wave has been rolling on the back of the Nordic TV series.

“They are generating an interest. But the individual book will always have to survive on its own. It needs to have sufficient weight to convince abroad,” she said.

One of the representatives for the new wave is Christian Jungersen who was invited to Singapore in the beginning of November as part of the Singapore Writers festival. At the panel discussion he presented his latest book You Disappear which is set to become a bestseller next year. It has been published in Denmark and a few other places to great reviews and will hit the big stage when it is launched in New York on January 7th.

Jungersen already made it to the international bestsellers lists with his former novel The Exception.

Kim Leine is one of the new names which might turn up in a bookstore close to you. The Dane just won this year’s annual Nordic Literature Prize. Other Danish names that might meet you on a shelf in any bookstore in Singapore are Jussi Adler-Olsen, Leif Davidsen, Elsebeth Egholm, Torben Nielsen and Michael Larsen.

www.christianjungersen.com
An overnight visit to Malaysia to one of the oldest still functioning Danish businesses in South East Asia marked another first for DABS.

The trip to United Plantations and the encounter with the sister organization Malaysian Danish Business Council was the first trip abroad - at least in this century. Due to the logistics at the plantation participation was limited to 20 persons and with the final headcount at 22 it was a full house ++.

After a dinner with members of the local chamber Friday evening at the busy nightlife area Changkat it was off early Saturday morning to the plantation which is two and a half hours drive northwest of Kuala Lumpur. A warm welcome by the brothers Carl and Martin Bek-Nielsen, supported by goodies from the Danish bakery at the plantation, was the starting point for a fantastic tour of the facility.

The plantation is one of the role models for the Malaysian palm-oil industry. It is agriculture but supported by a complete modernized production line with all possible green features and an aim to use every bit of the harvested fruits one way or the other. Even the last almost useless left overs are used to generate biogas for the electricity system.

United plantations was founded back in 1906 by Danish Siam pioneer Aage Westenholz and has for more than half a century been controlled or managed by the Bek-Nielsen family, beginning with the legendary Børge Bek-Nielsen. Today the plantation has approximately 40,000 hectare land under cultivation in Malaysia plus some new areas in Indonesia. www.unitedplantations.com
As the first Danish based bank Nordea has opened for private banking in Singapore.

Nordea was created between 1997 and 2000 as mergers among banks from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Danish part of the merger at that time was named Unibank, which itself was a merger among the renowned Danish banks Andelsbanken, Sparekassen SDS and Privatbanken.

The Nordea branch in Singapore has worked for years with the Singaporean authorities to make sure that everything was done according to strict Singaporean banking regulations, before it was possible to make this huge step in the development of its Singapore operations.

“Nordic businesses are growing in Asia and are thereby attracting more Nordic professionals to live and work in the region. The Nordic expatriates in Asia are also staying longer than they used to. Singapore is the centre for private banking in Asia, and now Nordea offers private banking services to the growing community of wealthy individuals from its newly opened branch in Singapore,” Nordea explains in a press release.

Nordea is the leading Nordic provider of international private banking services, and the Nordea Group is Northern Europe’s leading universal bank, with around 11 million customers, more than 1000 branch offices and EUR 224 billion in assets under management. The head of Nordea, Christian Clausen, is also president of the European Banking Federation.

“Asia-Pacific is an engine of growth for the world”, says CEO Jhon Mortensen of Nordea Bank S.A. “To present the growing number of Nordic individuals in the region with the same high quality private banking service as we do in Europe, we have opened a branch in Singapore, thereby making their access to the financial markets easier, more efficient and more secure.”

Nordea is providing a lot of other businesses from its headquarter in Springleaf Tower at Anson Road. For instance the bank is one of the leading international banks in shipping, providing a diversified range of services for that sector.

The new branch is headed by Eric Pedersen, who since 2000 has worked in senior roles within Asset Management and Private Banking. “Besides our reputation for seeing things from the client’s point of view, Nordea’s financial strength and the retained AA- rating is clearly an added attraction for wealthy clients looking for a safe and reliable private banking partner,” he says.

The Singapore team is composed of experienced, senior private bankers with financial market expertise who are supported by operational staff. In the team of account managers are Jonas Bergqvist (Swedish), Haavard Farstad (Norwegian), and Kim Osborg Nielsen (Danish). www.nordea.com
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The right-wing of Danish politics advanced at the polls for the local councils but the center-left Social Democrats remained the largest party and controls the big cities in Denmark.

The elections to the councils take place every fourth year, and this time they were scrutinized more closely than as usual since the country has got a new government in between.

The current center-left government led by the Social Democrats has been under pressure at the opinion polls. But the party lost only 1.1 pct. compared to 2009 and is till the largest party at this level with 29.5 pct. of the votes among the 98 town and county councils. The leading opposition party Venstre, the center-right party in control of the national government during the last council elections, crossed the goal line as second with 26.6 pct. after gaining 1.8 pct. The small gains however meant that Venstre picked up more than 10 new Mayors - gaining a handful more but also losing some as the power shifted in many councils around the country.

The four largest cities Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg are still leftwing red spots and controlled by the Social Democrats. The result leaves Frank Jensen, who visited Singapore last year, in the seat as Mayor of Copenhagen for another four years, heading a basically left wing coalition.

You are absolutely right if you feel that the surname of the new Danish Minister for Development and Cooperation sounds familiar.

45 year old Rasmus Helveg Petersen is son of former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs Niels Helveg Petersen, who served as political head of the Danish Foreign service between 1993 and 2000 - besides being Minister for Economic Affairs between 1988 and 1990. The Helveg Petersen dynasty has deep roots in Danish politics and the Social Liberal Party (De Radikale). Besides being a minister his father was member of the Danish parliament for more than 30 years and his brother Morten Helveg Petersen was a member for more than 10 years. Further back his grandfather Kristen Helveg Petersen was minister in several Danish governments and his grandmother Lilly Helveg Petersen was a former Mayor of Copenhagen.

The latest sprout from the dynasty came surprisingly to fame when the former minister Christian Friis Bach chose to step down on November 21 after being involved in an affair concerning a Danish-South Korean environment organization.

Rasmus Helveg Petersen was elected to Parliament in September 2011. He served as vice-chairman of the parliamentary group before he suddenly found himself in charge of The Ministry, which is part of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He is educated journalist and has worked a couple of years in one of the information departments in the parliament and as a political reporter covering the parliament for Danish newspapers. When he won the seat in 2011 he was Communications and Fundraising Director for WWF Denmark.

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Scandinavian Women’s Association (SWA) received one of the largest donations ever from the annual DABS Ball, which for the first time was made as a charity event.

Based on donations, sponsorships and lucky draws organized together by DABS and SWA the generous participants at the ball channelled around more than 15,000 SGD over to SWA. The money will be helping needy people in Singapore in various ways through local partners.

Basically SWA supports three charity networks. In the education sector it runs two scholarships - The Marit Thome Scholarship named after the Norwegian founder - at the 11 year old education facility Republic Polytechnic. Family wise SWA supports the Breadline Group of families in sudden need and The Tent, home to young girls who need to stay in a safe environment.

On the networking and socializing side SWA offers a monthly ladies lunch and a weekly Tour called Walk ‘n Talk, bringing the participants to places like Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, MacRitchie Reservoir and Sentosa.

Besides SWA organize visits to museums, guided tours and events. There have been tours to Chinatown and Little India as well as a Kranji war tour, and tours to the Pottery Jungle and Kong Meng San monastery at Bright Hill. All proceeds goes to charity.

New Chairwoman of SWA is Lisa Thrane, a long time Singaporean resident, who took over when Lis Heisselberg left Singapore earlier this year.

“We have improved our membership base, so we currently are 135 aiming for a goal of 150. We are also bringing in more minor sponsors, who can offer our members a discount. Today we have ten in this category,” Lisa Thrane explains and notes that SWA always can use more hands to fill in at positions at the board or the committees.

The foundation for SWA was laid back in 1975 as part of the Scandinavian Society and has since the closure of that organization in 1995 been registered on its own.

www.swasingapore.com.sg

With 135 members SWA is the largest Scandinavian networking and charity organization in Singapore
The annual DABS ball became another great glamour event and this time with some new features.

Large amount for charity

By Jan Lund
Photo by Ace Kindred Cheong
It was definitely not business as usual when DABS rolled out another glamorous and memorable annual ball.

The venue was new. The theme was new. In fact there never really was any theme before. And the ambience concerning the outfit of the partying crowd was new.

The DABS Ball 2013 at Pan Pacific Hotel was a masquerade and a charity. All new ways of approaching this after all traditional event, which for years has been an established feature in the Danish community.

Venue wise it has shifted throughout the years. Lately from Hilton to Sentosa to Shangri-La. Again this year the high class was maintained at the five star hotel Pan Pacific which did a great job, making fantastic food and making sure that there always were people around to cater for the needs of a relatively thirsty crowd.

The call for a masquerade was also a new thing bringing even more colour into an event that traditionally sees the ladies impressing the male crowd with fancy dresses from long evening gowns, to haute de couture to the more delicate stuff while the males often uses the occasion to dust of the tuxedos.

There were lots of strange and funny masks
out there as the photos on the following 6 pages reveal. Even the British Queen and her consort were seen going through the gate for a night of party and not to forget lucky draws.

The traditional lucky draw was extended significantly due to the fact that DABS for the first time made the ball a charity event. And the crowd responded with gusto and deep pockets to the call. Unbelievable the sponsorships, donations, draws and spontaneous auctions brought in around more than 15,000 SGD. The money will be handed over to the Scandinavian Women’s Association (SWA) which is a charity, running programs helping needy people in Singapore.

Maybe the charity part could have been rolling faster but as soon as it was over and the band began to play the crowd as usual showed its true colours. The dance floor was quickly invaded and it was not until the very early hours that the last partygoers called it a day - or should we say a night.

DABS is evaluating the ball every year. It’s not a given that such events will continue on and on. But considering the success in 2013 and the willingness of the Danish community to support this “the party of the year” there might be another one.

See you in 2014.
Welcome to town

Together with the Seaman’s Church, the Danish Embassy and other Danish organizations, DABS organized for the first time a welcome event for new (and already established) Danes coming to Singapore. The event at the church introducing the newcomers to the various Danish networks saw many people pass by and staying for dinner in the evening.

Among the visitors during the day was the new Singapore ambassador to Denmark Mr. A Selverajah, who is former ambassador to the Philippines. He is residing here in Singapore and was introduced to the Danish community by his college Danish college Berit Basse and presented himself in a short speech from the stage at the Seaman’s Church.

All about Indonesia

Many Danish companies are using Singapore as a hub for their interest in South East Asia. Trying to give those members of DABS the best possible knowledge about their markets outside The Little Red Dot, DABS has together with the Danish Embassy invited ambassadors from other Asean countries to Singapore to brief about the prospects.

In this capacity new ambassador to Indonesia Martin Bille Hermann was in Singapore at a well visited lunch meeting at the residence of the Danish ambassador Berit Basse. As shown in the pictures Martin Bille Hermann rolled out the perspectives and opportunities for Danish businesses in Indonesia - and did some valuable networking.

DABS and the Embassy has had the ambassador to Thailand in Singapore to tell about the opening of Myanmar, which is covered by the Bangkok Embassy and in the new year there plans for new presentations from neighboring ambassadors.
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