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Editorial Statement

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Editorial Statement

Culture is the word we use to describe the common practices, values, traditions, and history that binds a group of people together. Among the many definitions of culture, I find Clifford Geertz's description of culture as "the webs of significance" that people have spun for themselves most helpful, particularly with regard to the many different discussions of Danish American culture contained in this issue. Culture has many visible aspects, which can include songs, dances, dress, food, film, and material objects, as well as invisible elements that give a cultural shape to the experiences that individuals have. One of the primary reasons for the Danish American Heritage Society's existence is documenting how various webs of Danish cultural significance manifest themselves in the lives of Danish Americans. In this issue, we get the chance to explore many different aspects of Danish culture, from food to film, language to landscape, and Danes' love of the sea. Three of the articles in this issue were made possible by Bodtker grant-funded research, so if you enjoy them, consider donating to the Bodtker fund to support future research projects you'll be able to read about in *The Bridge*.

The first article in this issue, written by Catrine Kyster Christensen Giery, traces Danish food culture in San Francisco in the early decades of the twentieth century through advertisements for Danish eating establishments. This fascinating project shows how Danes on the West Coast were able to preserve their connection with their homeland through *rullepølse* and *smørrebrød*.

In the second article, which was funded by a Bodtker grant, Lyng Stegger Gemzøe considers the challenges of adapting the Danish/Swedish television show *Bron/Broen* for an American audience. Despite the popularity of Scandinavian crime dramas in the English-speaking world, he concludes that the cultural specificity of the story's setting is what makes it difficult—though not impossible—to adapt to a different cultural context.

The third article, also the product of Bodtker grant funding, offers a more linguistic perspective on cultural maintenance, within a framework of both theoretical and historical contexts. In this article, Nick Kofod Mogensen carefully documents the Danish Brotherhood's attempts, in the years between World War I and World War II, to bal-



ance the role of language in cultural identity with the need to accommodate the changing needs of its members

The fourth article, which is the third Bodtker grant-supported article in this issue, is the first half of Jakob Jakobsen's two-part history of the Danish settlements in Dagmar, Montana. In this article, Jakobsen looks at the religious dissonance and land hunger that drove his own great-grandparents to participate in the settlement of Dagmar, despite the many hardships that endeavor entailed.

Last but certainly not least, the fifth article is Thomas Henriksen's moving portrait of his father Paul's journey from the streets of Copenhagen via the high seas and the horrors of World War I to a life spent on the Great Lakes. Despite many changes of scenery and a shift to English, Paul Henriksen maintained the love of the water that seems to run in the veins of all Danes.

Looking at Danish American culture and history from so many angles reminds us how rich and complex a thing culture is. Each of us has the opportunity to choose the webs of significance that give meaning to our lives. We're grateful that you've chosen to make Danish American heritage part of yours. The 40th anniversary conference of the DAHS, which will be held in Schaumburg, Illinois in October 2017, will provide an opportunity to trace many more cultural webs between Denmark and America, so we hope you'll join us.

