



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

OSLO, NORWAY

April NEWSLETTER 04/2021

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Number 464



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

P.O. Box 1505 Vika, 0117 Oslo, Norway

Telephone: 973 25 290 Website: www.iforum.no

Visiting address	Kronprinsens gate 3, Victoria Passasjen
Board 2020 – 2021	Anita Pratap (President), Sissel Lindeman, Yan Donko, Gulhan Çorman, Heidi von Weltzien Høivik, Wenche Mohr, Elizabeth Rasmussen, Elizabeth Groth Kolby (Deputy) Patricia Leon de la Barra (Deputy), Jessie Sandosham (Deputy), Patricia Blackwell (Advisor)
Office Coordinator	Dorota Steensland
Office Team	Patricia Blackwell, Karin Skoglund
Office hours	Please email queries
Email	int.forum@online.no
Editor	Elizabeth S. Rasmussen
Secretary	Elsbeth Walseth
Treasurer	Anne-Lise Fasteland
Auditor	Verena Krienke
Art Committee	Jane Steenbuch
Monthly Meetings	Laila Hægh Berit Lindstrøm
Special Events	Mona B. Reinboth
Activities	Anita Solheim

Forum Diary

Date	Event	Time	Page
May 3	Dr. Trond Bakkevig on the Impact of Religions in the Middle East Process	19:00	6
May 25	Kistefos Art Centre	12:00	7
June 7	Annual General Meeting	18:00	4

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the May *Newsletter* is Wednesday, **April 28**.

Please visit our website www.iforum.no for updates and the latest information.

From the President



Dear Members,

Like dependable, old friends, they return every spring. A cluster of purple crocuses squeeze through the greening earth, cheerfully announcing the arrival of spring. This year, they began sprouting early in my *natural garden* – a fancy way of saying that it's 'wild and landscaped' by nature and untouched by human hand. Garden tools are not the preferred instruments in our household.

These crocuses have a short life of about ten glorious days, but they have a rich and colourful history of 4,000 years, cross-pollinating between cultures, east and west. They don't care about Gregorian calendars or spring breaks. They blossom to nature's clock, which seems re-set by climate change these days. With no visits from family or friends for more than a year, the arrival of these beautiful crocuses filled me with joy.

That joy was strengthened while wandering in Ekebergparken and thinking about the living conditions of the people who lived there 2,500 years ago, without electricity, medicines or internet. Unlike us, they could not hope their situation would improve in a year or two. In fact, it would not improve for another two millennia! And yet, they lived their lives celebrating the newborn, mourning their dead, shivering and suffering, toiling and dying prematurely of disease and poisonous bites.

We all have our feelings and frustrations. But if we glance back at our ancestors, or sideways at the struggle of the less fortunate today, we realize how blessed we are, even if the pandemic has disrupted the life we are used to. Late or early, spring doth arrive. This year, the symbolism of the crocuses as the harbingers of spring, joy and rebirth is rich in meaning and comfort. It heralds sunnier times.

Best regards,

Anita Pratap

President



THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, June 07 at 18:00



Member of the Year Award

We would like to remind you of the Member of the Year Award. The guidelines for nominating a Member of the Year are found in the February *Newsletter*. So please, nominate one person whom you believe deserves this award for 2021. Please do so before **May 16**.

COMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETING

Rev. Dr. Canon Trond Bakkevig on

The Impact of Religions in the Middle East Peace Process

Monday, May 3 at 19:00

The Zoom will open at 18:40 - Please make sure that you are “seated” by 19:00.



The Monthly Meeting Committee is happy to announce that Dr Trond Bakkevig has kindly agreed to meet us on Zoom for what will certainly be an interesting lecture on some of the synergies in the Middle East Process. Dr Bakkevig is newly retired as Archdeacon of Vestre Aker, the Church of Norway.

His doctoral thesis at the University of Oslo (1984) was on theology and nuclear arms. Linked to this work was an article on the issue of *Just War* from 1983.

As a Convener for the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land,

Dr Bakkevig has been facilitating dialogue between the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, and the Supreme Judge of the

Sharia Courts in Palestine. He was also involved in dialogues elsewhere in the Middle East.

He was the personal adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1988-1989, and the Moderator of the Board of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights in 1993-1998.

His writing focuses primarily on political ethics, the relationship between church, religion and society, but lately also on the role of religious dialogue and cooperation between religions in relation to peace negotiations and peace processes. He has also written numerous scientific and popular articles in Norwegian and international books and journals. These have mostly dealt with issues of ecclesiology, ethics and pastoral theology.

ART COMMITTEE

The Kistefos Museum

Tuesday, May 25

The Art Committee has the pleasure of inviting you to a guided tour of the Sculpture Park at the Kistefos Museum, which opens in May. The scenic sculpture park has an impressive collection of works by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists, including Anish Kapoor, Jeppe Hein, Tony Cragg, Olafur Eliasson, Fernando Bottero and Elmgreen & Dragset. The Sculpture Park, which is usually open all year, focuses on international contemporary works of art.



The Twist at Kistefos won the Leading Culture Destinations Award for Best Architecture in 2020. The fabulous new museum, designed by world-renowned architect firm Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), opened in September 2019. The building has been called the ‘top architectural museum project in the world’ by both the *Daily Telegraph* and *Bloomberg*. The Twist is a gallery, a bridge, and

a sculpture, and the recognition that this architecturally iconic building now receives is wonderful.

Kistefos has an industrial history. It was originally a saw mill and a power station. The old industrial buildings and their machines form part of an Industrial Museum and an art gallery.

DATE/TIME: Tuesday **May 25** at 12:00

For further information, please contact the office by email.

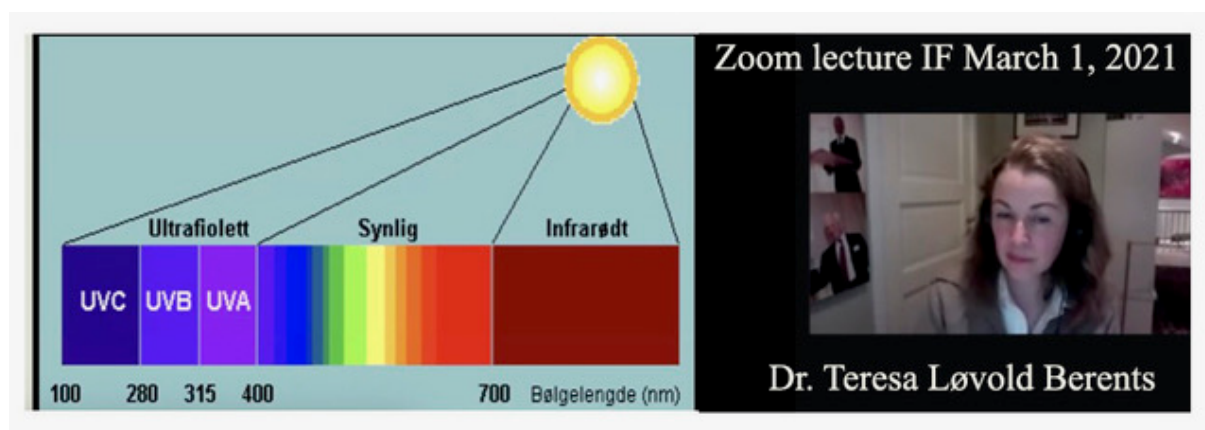
R E P O R T S

March Monthly Meeting

Teresa Berents on Skin Health and Disease

Teresa Løvold Berents MD, PHD, is a specialist in skin and venereal diseases.

Twenty-eight people attended this interesting Zoom lecture on skin diseases. Dr Berents started her presentation by describing the skin and its different layers and the importance of having an intact skin barrier. If the skin barrier is deficient, moisture will evaporate, and bacteria and harmful agents can penetrate the skin. Inflammation may also be due to immunological reactions in the skin.



Dr Berents elaborated on three topics: Atopic eczema, seborrheic dermatitis, and sun-damaged skin. She also explained how dermatologists make a diagnosis and determine which treatments are available. She also talked about how to keep the skin healthy.

Atopic eczema is a common chronic condition that often debuts in the first year of life. Many children are only lightly affected and very often they ‘grow out’ of it, whereas others carry the condition into adulthood. For the severely affected, the disease greatly impairs the quality of life for both children and parents. Treatment includes avoiding triggering factors and keeping the skin barrier as intact as possible. Emollients help the damaged skin barrier to recover and

prevent flares. To reduce inflammation, topical steroids, UV therapy and systemic therapy can be used, depending on how severe the eczema is.

Seborrheic dermatitis is another common skin disease, and many people have it without knowing recognising it for what it is. It may start both in infancy and adulthood. Some have maybe seen the so-called cradle cap in infants, which causes crusty or oily scaly patches on a baby's scalp, a bit like dandruff. The condition isn't painful or itchy.

In adults, the rash occurs in the scalp and on the forehead, sometimes on the nostrils, the ears, along the sternum, in the armpit or around the genitals. The pathogenesis behind seborrheic dermatitis is a change in the microbes on the skin. Risk factors and triggers are cold, dry climate, stress, neurological, heart or psychiatric conditions. Ketoconazole shampoo sold over the counter at pharmacies can help. Many of the commercial dandruff shampoos can also help against light cases of seborrheic dermatitis. Severe cases of inflammation are usually treated by topical steroids and UV radiation.

Sun-damaged skin is caused by too much exposure to sunlight. It is common especially in late adulthood. Dr Berents showed pictures of patients whose skin had been sun exposed for many years, resulting in deep wrinkles, pigmented lesions, inflamed lesions and erosions – so-called solar keratosis – and different kinds of skin cancer. The most dangerous is malignant melanoma. In Norway, malignant melanoma has quite a high prevalence: 44.9 cases per 100,000 in men, and 39.4 in women.



Solar keratosis

The risk factors and triggers of sun-damaged skin is the UV radiation from the sun and also from sunbeds. Dr Berents points out that ‘Sunbeds have mostly UV irradiation, which is associated with malignant melanoma. Why these beds are not prohibited in Norway is a big question’.

People with fair skin are especially exposed to sun damage. The treatment is usually surgery, photodynamic therapy, immune-modulating therapy or radiation therapy.

To keep your skin healthy, Dr Berents recommends to not smoke – as smoking makes the skin age faster – and not to use sunbeds. Try to have healthy sun-exposure habits and a good diet. Exercise daily and have a daily skin care routine. If you discover a new or different lesion – contact your doctor.

After the lecture, Dr Berents kindly stayed on to answer questions. Will a sun cream from last summer be effective this year? A test shows that the sunscreen factor stayed unchanged in an unopened tube kept in a closet at a stable temperature for one year. There are no studies of sun cream tubes that have been opened and brought along to the beach and so on. A sun cream with factor 15 eliminates 95% of the UV radiation and one with factor 50 blocks 97%. So, the difference is not substantial. It is, however, important to reapply sun cream every two hours when UV values are high, usually between 10:00 and 15:00

From October till February, we do not get enough sun to produce vitamin D; nevertheless, we store enough vitamin D through normal sun exposure the rest of the year to take us through winter. The best source of vitamin D, apart from the sun, is cod-liver oil, which is recommended in winter.

What about skin cancer screening of the whole population? In Norway, self-examination is recommended, as public screening programmes tend to require more resources than the benefits they provide.

The president thanked Dr Berents for her very interesting and informative lecture.

Gunnel Anita Solheim

ARTIST BENTE BRANDT

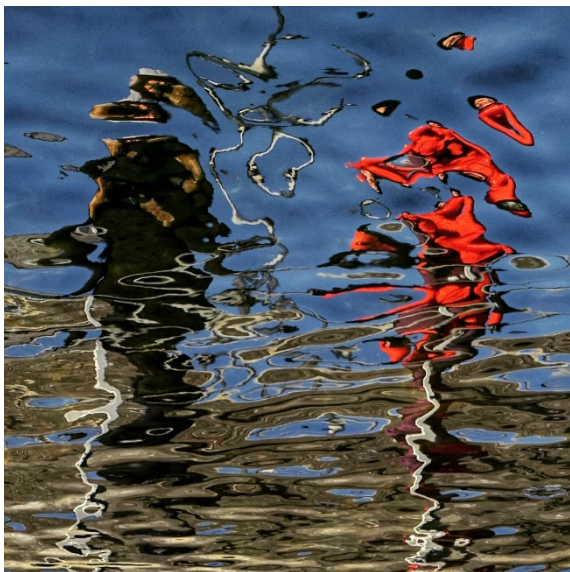
‘My Camera is my Brush, Water my Canvas’

Says Artist and International Forum member, Bente Brandt, who uses water ripples to create exquisite images that linger in the mind long after your eyes move on. Her photographs are surreal, ethereal reflections that encourage you to reflect on reality.

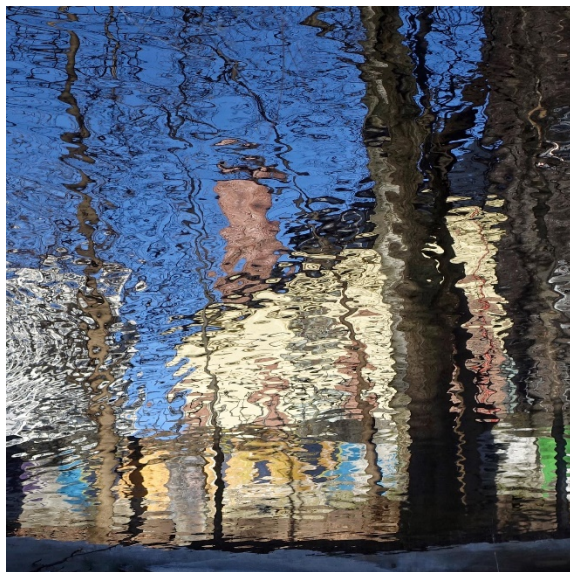


Disintegrating plans

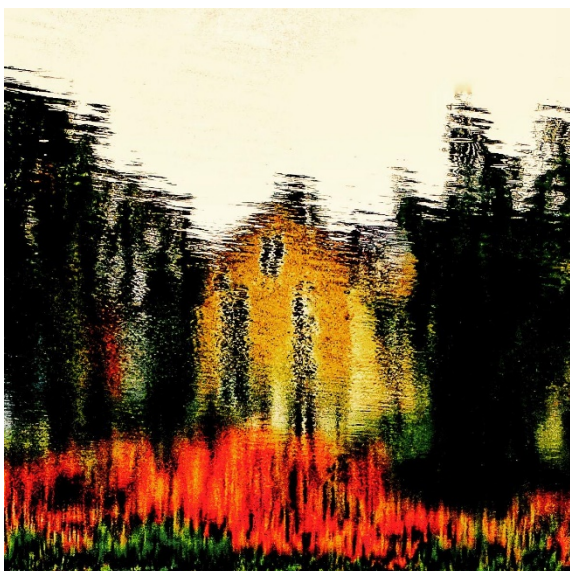
My works represent what I call my ‘Norwegian Period’. Having lived and travelled abroad all my life, I have worked with materials and methods that were conducive to specific places. A camera was always in my pocket. It became a very useful and lightweight tool over the years, so I started using it for my art without knowing anything about settings. In Norway, I started looking at reflections with a new interest. The light, the colours, the perception changes, everything is brighter, and often very distorted. I could choose how much distortion I wanted by waiting for the right moment or the right body of water. Puddles, rivers, ponds. And with hardly any editing, it is what it is. Perception is reality. My camera is my ‘brush’, and water my “canvas”.



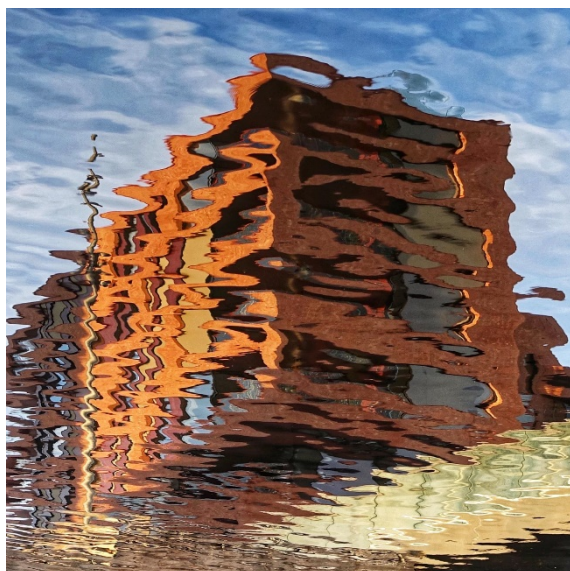
My transmuted IF friends,
Viebecke and Kumiko



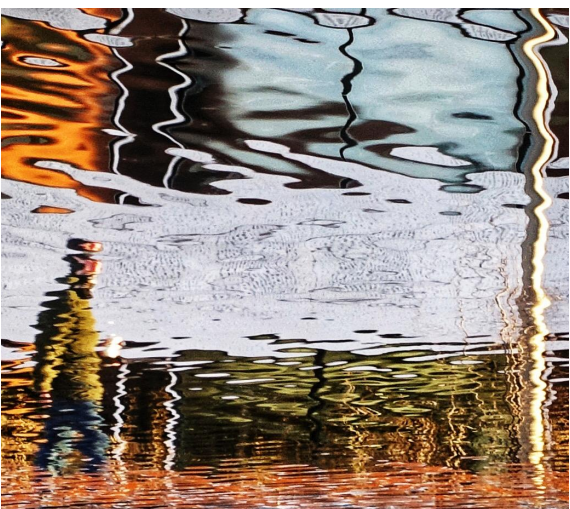
The Candescent Cottage



The Gardener's Garden



Wannabe Gaudi



Leaving the Point



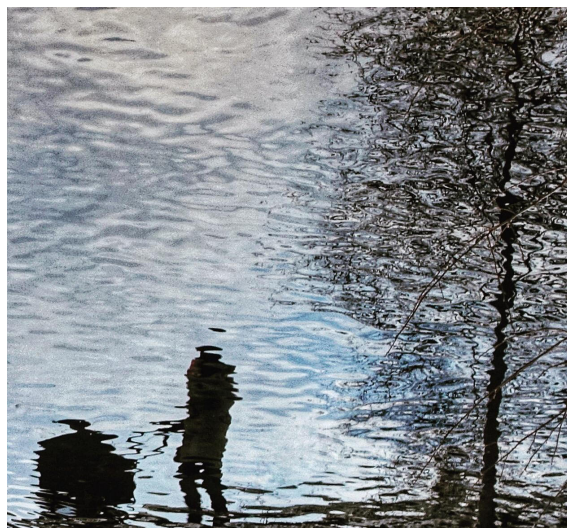
In Passing



Fashionista in the Forest



Almost home



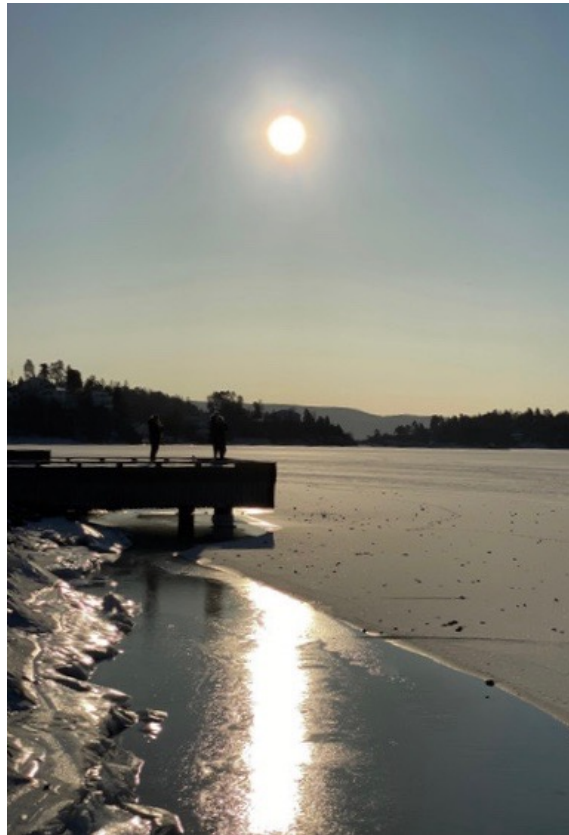
Mother and Child

The Walking Group

The walking group has been out walking this winter!
The picture of the five walkers was taken by a helpful passing stranger.



Taken by a stranger



Freezing cold – Gorgeous sun!
Maridalssvannet by Elizabeth Kolby

IMPRESSIONS OF NORWAY

Blue and Green and Oslo in Between

Text and Photographs by

Duarte Pinto da Rocha, Counsellor at the Embassy of Portugal, who has explored the sights and scenes in and around our city



The icy blue of Sognsvann in winter



The lush green of Nordmarka in summer

For a ‘Southern European’ Portuguese, being posted in Oslo since 2018 has meant experiencing the Scandinavian way of living, discovering both the similarities and the sense of community that unites us and the multiple subtle differences on a daily basis. The identity of Norway and Portugal and their people has been shaped by many generations and their rapport with the geographical, cultural and climatic realities, as well as their relationship with the sea.

I take this chance to emphasize the serene cordiality of the Norwegians and the human scale of Oslo, and the fact that in international terms it is still a particularly safe city, like Lisbon. The human scale of the capital invites us to set out on long walks between the mountains and the sea and lets us experience the interaction between the urban and the natural environments, both integral parts of the city’s identity.

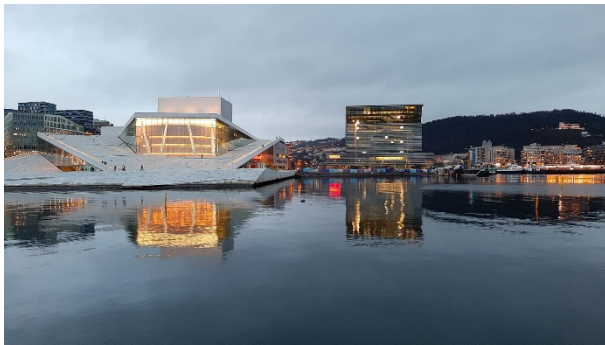


From Bygdøy

The human dimension of Oslo gives space for Nature’s glory.

With these aspects in mind, it has become a habit – increasingly entrenched as time goes by – to set out regularly to discover new spots, either by myself or in the company of our ‘mushroom & berries’ walking group, all of whom I want to thank for their precious comradeship.

These walks have been and still are the perfect opportunity for practicing an old hobby of mine – photography – and make use of the incredibly multifaceted and contrasting light of Norway, a country in which the Four Seasons are still well marked and have a profound impact on the way of life and on the various landscapes.



Rising from the fjord like a marble glacier



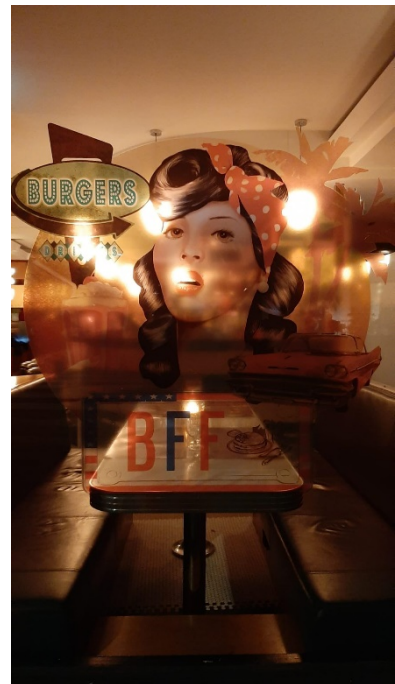
Street Art – Grit and Graffiti



Nature's Street Art



Gateway of the Mind



Retro Metro

The sharp contrast between the green country of summer and the white country of the very long winter is amazing. That's something special to share again with family and friends once the pandemic is overcome. It will allow us to return to the longest walks with breaks in the city's countless cafés and terraces.

There always seems to be another pleasant new corner to be discovered. This is a country and a city in which you have the impression that you are visiting untouched, pristine nature, and you can do so not far from urban areas.



Northern Daylights

*‘You can visit pristine nature, not
far from urban centers.’*

*‘There’s always a pleasant new
corner to be discovered.’*

Duarte Pinto da Rocha
Captions by Anita Pratap



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Org.no: 994 566 806

President

Anita Pratap

Editor and Layout:

Elizabeth Rasmussen and Editorial Team

Editorial Team:

Elspeth Walseth and Josephine Kamsvåg

Dispatch Team:

Susan Hahla, Kerstin Petersen, Mona Reinboth, Mette Svadberg, Wenche Undrum, Elspeth Walseth and Patricia Blackwell

The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit **all** material.

Date: April 15, 2021