



# INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

## NEWSLETTER

January 2023  
Issue No. 481

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## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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

Website: [www.iforum.no](http://www.iforum.no) Email: [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no)

**Visiting address:** Kronprinsens gate 3, Victoria Passasjen

**Bank account number:** 1600 40 36631

**VIPPS to:** **591747**

**Board 2022 – 2023:** **Anita Pratap** (President), Sissel Lindeman, Gulhan Çorman, Heba Mamish, Wenche Mohr, Elizabeth Rasmussen, Elizabeth Groth Kolby (Deputy) Lien Nguyen (Deputy), Jessie Sandosham (Deputy)

**Office Team:** Patricia Blackwell, Karin Skoglund

**Office hours:** Please send enquiries by email

**Editor:** Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

**Editorial Team:** Elspeth Walseth, Josephine Kamsvåg

**Secretary:** Elspeth Walseth

**Treasurer:** Anne-Lise Fasteland

**Auditor:** Verena Krienke

**Committee Leaders:**

Monthly Meetings Signe Howell

Special Events Mona B. Reinboth

Art Jane Steenbuch

Activities Anita Solheim

If you wish to become a member of International Forum, please contact us by email.



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## DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **February Newsletter** is **January 16**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen. The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit *all* material.



## From the President

Happy New Year!

Let's hope the new year brings happiness. We have had three tough years in a row with pandemic, war and inflation. 'Bad things come in threes' as an old saying goes. Maybe the spell breaks now.

When lockdown ended, it was as if people were making up for lost time with activities 'on steroids' – doing everything, everywhere, all the time. Life became breathless, noisy, high-speed. But stillness is equally important. American artist Rockwell Kent, who wandered in the Alaskan wilderness, explained that 'In the quietness, when nothing happens, the soul expands.'

'In the *busyness* of life, we neglect the soul's need to expand – to hear the flutter of butterfly wings, smell the pines, taste morning dew, see the shooting star – sounds and sights that make us realize how fragile, fleeting and forceful Life is.'

We are small in the vastness of the universe, yet connected to the mite and the mighty. The individual and the universal, the immediate and the eternal – it's all connected. Writer Virginia Woolf wrote that 'the whole world is a work of art, and we are parts of that work of art.' This gives us the encouragement and perspective to deal with the bad – while hoping that the good things will now come in threes.

If hope is just wishful thinking or passive optimism, it achieves little. Hope is the motivating force that *makes* good things happen. Hope motivated humankind's historic journey on this miracle called Earth. This year, planet, peace, pandemic, prices will be on everyone's minds. We can make good things happen to planet Earth and to each other.

Wishing you and your family all good things in 2023!

Best regards

*Anita Pratap*

President

## FROM THE BOARD NEW MEMBERS



This month the Board has the pleasure of welcoming three new member:  
We are looking forward to getting to know these ladies. Their interests span widely, and we hope to see them at our events and groups.

We are so happy to have them on board!

## COMING EVENTS

### REMINDER

## JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING

**January 9**

Norwegian secondary homes (*hytter*) and kinship relations



Why are *hytter* (chalets or secondary homes) - so important to many Norwegians? And what may we learn about Norwegian kinship and Norwegian families from studying their beloved and contested secondary homes?

Dr Marianne Lien is a Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo. In her lecture, she will share her insight into how *hytter* are implicated in both building and breaking family and kinship bonds.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **January 9** at 18:45 (for 19:00)

SIGN UP: To Signe Howell, by email, as soon as possible and **no later than Wednesday, January 4.**

NB! As of February, Anita Solheim will do the sign-ups for the Monthly Meetings.

For more information, please see the December *Newsletter*.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### *City Scapes – Capturing Oslo*

The history of Oslo/Christiania shown by artists

**January 26**



Welcome to this beautiful and historically interesting exhibition at Oslo Museum at Frogner park. The exhibition illustrates, through paintings, how the city of Oslo/Christiania has changed and developed over the last three hundred years.

*Cityscapes – Capturing Oslo* shows us the city from an artistic point of view. You can enjoy works by famous artists such as Peder Balke and Edvard Munch, as well as less known painters. The paintings come mostly from Oslo Museum's own art collection.

Refreshments are available at the museum's café.

**DATE/TIME:** Thursday **January 26** at 10:45 (for 11:00)

**SIGN UP:** To Rosemary Hauge no later than the deadline **January 17**. Please state your name and event when you sign-up, and 'lunch' if you plan to stay for refreshments at the café, as we need to reserve tables.

For more information, see the December *Newsletter*.

## FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

**February 6**



**Tove Romsaas Wang**, former Director General of Save the Children Norway and a registered nurse, has been a long-time NGO worker. She has a Master in International Health from John Hopkins University in 1982. After a short career at Rikshospitalet and a mission for the UN and WHO in Jemen in the 70s, she became involved in Save the Children Norway as a programme coordinator and later as director of SCN's International Services. Ms Wang became the organisation's on-site representative in Zimbabwe in 1991, then Deputy Secretary General of the International Save the Children before being appointed Secretary General in 2018. She was awarded the King's Medal of Merit in 2019.

She will talk about her work in the service of Save the Children.

**DATE/TIME:** Monday, **February 6** at 18:45 (for 19:00)

**SIGN UP:** To Anita Solheim, by email, no later than Wednesday, **February 1**.

**PRICE:** NOK 105.- **Please sign up and pay.** Please make your payment **preferably** by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

**TRANSPORT:** T-Bane 1 to Vinderen. Pay parking in the adjoining area until 20:00.

Guests are welcome.

No-shows will be charged. For last minute cancellations, please call Anita Solheim



## ART COMMITTEE

### Visit to Flytårnet, Kulturgaten, and the Cultural Centre at Fornebu

**February 16**



Flytårnet Kultursenter is located in the old workshops around the control tower of what was Oslo's airport, Fornebu. There are nearly 100 studios and workshops for artists, wood carvers, ceramicists, sculpturers, glassworkers, frame makers and interior designers, in addition to four galleries: Volart, Galleri DC-3, Galleri Odonata and Bærum Kunsthall. The buildings are also home to three museums, Kultur på Hjul ('culture on wheels': cars), the Vespa Museum, and Fornebu Historical Museum.

Flytårnet Fornebu and Flytårnet Kultursenter invite us to a light lunch at 12:00 with a presentation of the centre and plans for future development. Afterwards, we will explore some of the studios.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **February 16** at 11:.45 (for 12:00)

SIGN UP: To Jane Steenbuch by email as **soon as possible** and no later than **February 13**.

PLACE: Flytårnet Kultursenter, Forneburingen 11-43, 1360 Fornebu.

PRICE: The visit is **free of charge**. The cost of the lunch will be posted in the February *Newsletter* (if this is necessary).

TRANSPORT: By car: Follow signs to Fornebu (and Snarøya). Turn right on Odd Nansensvei, and right again into Forneburingen. Follow the road around to the right and right again into the parking place. Paid parking. For road instructions, click on the link:

[Forneburingen 1-57 - Bing Maps](#)

By bus: Take bus 31 to Snarøya and get off at Telenor Fornebu. From the bus stop there is a 10-minute walk.

Maximum 25 participants. Guests are welcome if space is available.

For last-minute cancellations, please call Jane on mobile phone.



# *A C T I V I T I E S*

## **ACTIVITY GROUPS AND COURSES**

### **SPRING 2023**

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

International Forum Activity Groups are formed when one member or a group of members get together and organise an activity. No payment is required, and the activities are open to all members, depending on availability. Are you interested? See the contact information below.

If you are interested in an activity that is full, sign up anyway, as there may be cancellations. If you have problems joining an activity because it is full, please contact Gunnel Anita Solheim, as we might consider forming a new group.

**Contact:** Gunnel Anita Solheim.

#### **ACTIVITY GROUPS**

##### **The Norwegian Conversation Group** (norsk samtalegruppe).

This is a group of twenty ladies from Japan, India, Colombia, Russia, Peru, Canada, Taiwan, Hungary, and Norway. New members of International Forum are welcome. The gatherings will start again in January. We meet once a month in each other's homes. The intention of the group is to practise speaking Norwegian in an informal setting and to share experiences and interests in our daily life. We have all levels of proficiency.

There is no homework since the main point is to come together and have fun. The hostess decides if she wants to serve a light lunch or just coffee and biscuits (or cake) after the practice session. We usually meet on Fridays at 11:00.

The date of the first meeting will be announced.

**Contact:** Eva Øglænd or Mona Bækkelund Reinboth,

#### **DRAMA READING GROUP**



The drama readings are normally held once a month in a member's home. Due to the pandemic and personal issues, the meetings have been very limited in the last couple of years. The plays chosen are both old and new, and are from all around the world. The readings are in English. The dates for the readings are flexible and usually decided a month in advance depending on how many can attend on a certain date.

A light lunch will be served after the reading. Hopefully the Drama Reading Group will resume activities in the third week in February, depending on how many ladies want to participate!

**Contact:** Suzanne Garman-Vik.

## INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB I



The gatherings are held on the third Wednesday of the month in members' homes, and the hostess serves a light lunch. We read and discuss books, usually novels by international authors, chosen by the group. We will be reading the following books in the spring of 2023:

January 25 – *At the Breakfast Table* by Defne Suman

February 15 - *The Orphanage: A Novel* by Serhiy Zhadan

March 15 – *The World of Yesterday. Memories of a European* by Stefan Zweig

April TBA - *The Years* by Annie Ernaux (Nobel laureate 2022)

June TBA – *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* by Shehan Karunatilaka

If you are interested in joining us:

**Contact:** Dorota Steensland.

## INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB II



The same procedures as those of the International Book Club I. The gatherings take place once a month. We have decided to read the following books in the spring of 2023. As always, we meet in each other's home for a light lunch on the first Thursday of the month at 13:00. The person who suggested the book of the month prepares a short presentation and leads the discussion.

January 5 – *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel Garcia Marques (a short, delightful book) and 'only if you want to', *The Years* by Annie Ernaux

February 2 – *The Good Father* by Noah Hawly

March 2 – *Outliner* by Rachel Cusk

April 13 – *In the Skin of a Lion* by Michal Ondaatje

May 4 – *The Sun also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway

June 1 – *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins

**Contact:** Heidi Høivik.

## COOKING GROUP I

Cooking Group I has been up and running for many years, I have notes dating back to 1996. Some of the 'founding' ladies still participate in our group. Since we rotate between each other's private homes, there will sometimes be limited space, but please contact us if you are interested.

**Contact:** Liss Laan.

## MONTHLY WEDNESDAY BRIDGE GROUP

We generally meet on the second or third Wednesday of the month, depending on the holidays. We are usually 8 or 12 players, on occasion 16. We play duplicate bridge and enjoy a light lunch afterwards. If you are interested:

**Contact:** Ida Tschudi Heilemann.

## MONDAY DUPLICATE BRIDGE

We usually play bridge every Monday. The gatherings take place in members' homes. If you are interested, please contact Kirsten Whist for more information.

**Contact:** Kirsten Whist.

## PHOTO GROUP



We are amateur photographers. No qualifications are required other than being interested in learning about digital photography. The aim is to become a better photographer, learn how to master devices such as camera, telephone, computer, iPad and learn how to make Photo Books, Greeting Cards, or how to post Instagram stories, etc.

We have workshops 4-6 times a year at Gunnel Anita's home or at another member's home from 13:00 – 15:00. Sometimes, we go on an outdoor photo 'safari'.

Mr. Zulawski, the husband of the Polish ambassador, who is a very skilled amateur photographer, has offered to give a lesson in editing photos in PhotoShop. This will probably take place in mid-January. If you are interested, please let us know!

**Contact:** Gunnel Anita Solheim.

## WALKING GROUP



Kerstin Pettersen will send an e-mail to the group members and inform them of the first walk of spring 2023. Walking is great exercise and fun for those who like the outdoors. If you are interested, please send Kerstin your mobile number and email address.

**Contact:** Kerstin Petersen.

## SWIMMING AT LYSEBU

International Forum members will be most welcome to swim at Lysebu – the Danish Cultural Centre at Voksenkollen. Members only have to show their IF membership card at the front desk. The fee is NOK 100.- per visit. IF members can use this great, newly renovated facility as a group or individually. Any questions?



**Contact:** Gunnel Anita Solheim.

## COURSES

The courses are activities for which the participants pay a **fee** to the teacher.

### TRADITIONAL NORWEGIAN ROSE PAINTING

Rose painting ('rosemaling') is a traditional Norwegian folk art which goes back to the 1700s and which is still alive in many parts of the country. Morning and evening courses can be organised for large or small groups.

**Contact:** Vivian Grieg Teisner.

## *R E P O R T S*

### **DECEMBER PRE-CHRISTMAS MEETING**

A total of 52 turned up for the Christmas meeting, which was a very lively and happy event. Perhaps because the last two years were cancelled due to the covid-19 situation, people were especially eager to enjoy themselves this time.



The high point of the evening was the piano recital performance given by Soen Eng Yap. With her professional touch and enthusiasm, she played: J.S. Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*; Ludwig van Beethoven's *Grande Sonate Pathetique*, op. 13 no.8, the second movement; and F. Chopin's *Scherzo no. 2*, op. 31. Thank you so much, Soen Eng!

The food was plentiful and delicious and the cakes baked by members of the committee so scrumptious. There was more than enough to go around. I don't think anyone went home hungry!

The raffle raised NOK 5 950 and the proceeds will be given to to **Fransiskus-hjelpen** (*The Fransiscan Aid*) in Oslo.





*Gathering around the cakes*



*Anita Solheim's Christmas Cake*



*Soen Eng Yap and Anita Pratap*



After the meal, everyone joined in a lively sing-along accompanied by Soen Eng on the piano.

Altogether, the Christmas meeting of 2022 was a success, thanks to past and present members of the Monthly Meeting Committee who made all the practical arrangements!

Signe Howell

## DIPLOMATIC CHARITY EVENT 2022

*To Ukraine with Love*

The DCE raised NOK 275 000 to save lives in Ukraine



Stortingspresident Masud Gharakhani and Ambassador of Ukraine Lilia Honcharevych

The year ended on a strong note for International Forum and Oslo's CD Community with a successful Diplomatic Charity Event to raise funds for Ukraine. Over 400 guests attended, and 55 embassies participated. DCE 2022 exceeded all expectations. President of the Norwegian Parliament Masud Gharakhani was the Guest of Honour. He said that 'with the funds raised, the *Ambulance to save lives* can purchase a fully equipped ambulance made in Ukraine. This will not only help those suffering injury due to the war, but also strengthen the local economy and contribute to the maintenance of jobs.'

Stortingspresident Gharakhani spoke movingly about his experience in Ukraine and thanked the organisers of DCE – the Female Ambassadors Oslo, International Forum and Diplomatic Spouses Association of Norway – for their hard work in organising the event.

*"The humanitarian cause that we are here to support this evening is crucial to the lives of many of our Ukrainian friends. I am glad to see so many of you here."*

**Masud Gharakhani**  
Stortingspresident

At this year's DCE, 43 embassies provided delicious national delicacies and drinks. Exotic food, wine and liqueurs were plentiful in a presentation of amazing variety and abundance. International Forum presented the Norwegian table with fenalår (cured leg of lamb), smoked salmon, Jarlsberg cheese, pepperkake with blue cheese and kransekake.

**On December 22, International Forum transferred the donation of NOK 275,000 to Ukrainsk Forening Øst-Norge for the purchase of the ambulance.**



*‘Civil society and voluntary organisations are an important part of our democracy. They complement efforts by the authorities.’*

**Masud Gharakhani,**  
Stortingspresident

*‘One of the ambulances that will be helping victims of the war in Ukraine will be “ours” – of the diplomatic community in Norway & of our Norwegian friends and donors.’*

Ambassador of Poland  
**Iwona Woicka – Żuławska**



← **Ambassador of Ukraine Lilia Honcharevych:** *‘I express appreciation to our big diplomatic family for all the humanitarian efforts. Inspired by the initiative of the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska we will save lives by buying an ambulance for Ukraine, equipped in Ukraine. Ambulance vehicles rescue people under shelling, take out the wounded on roads that have been destroyed by explosions. Ukraine defends shared values and the security of the European continent. Assistance to Ukraine is the best investment in the future of Europe. Together we are stronger! Slava Ukraini!’*



Co-organisers of DCE 2022: Ambassador of Poland Iwona Woicka - Żuławska, FAO, President of International Forum Anita Pratap and Gülhan Çorman, Head of Diplomatic Spouses Association

The DCE co-organisers had established a selection process to choose the organisation that would receive the proceeds of the charity event. Humanitarian and aid organisations working for Ukraine were invited to submit their projects. Six organisations were shortlisted - Caritas, Norseaid, Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Red Cross, Dråpe i Havet and Ukrainsk Forening Øst-Norge. The chosen mission was Ukrainsk Forening Øst-Norge's project *Ambulance to save lives!* At the DCE 2022, all six organisations were given an opportunity to present their work at their stands and collect donations for the projects that did not make it to final round this year.

In addition to the remarkable diversity of flavours and choice of food and drink from different lands, DCE 2022 also included an arts and crafts exhibition together with a silent auction, as well as cultural programmes and videos showcasing the talent, technology and tourist destinations of the participating countries.



The raffle prizes were fantastic. There were 52 prizes in all, each prize being a basket of goodies from different countries. Typically, a basket would contain bottles of wine, olive oil, books, cheese, cosmetics, chocolate and exotic spices. IF had several lucky winners. The biggest basket of the evening was won by Turid Grønli.

*Turid Grønlie won this basket of gifts at the raffle*

It included four bottles of wine, two different packets of ham, variety of spices, olives, asparagus, canned bell pepper, glass of almonds, snacks with olive oil, Fallera rice, and eight boxes of different kinds of cookies and chocolates. Turid commented: 'It was a wonderful event, very well arranged with an important message of hope for Ukraine.' Raffle prizes also included air tickets, artefacts, restaurant and hotel vouchers.

A big *Thanks* to fellow members of IF's DCE team – Anne-Lise Fasteland, Bente Brandt, Elizabeth Rasmussen, Jesse Sandosham, Kumiko Larssen, Mona Reinboth, Sigrid Langbrekke, Sissel Lindeman, Sonia Mykkletun, Turid Grønlie and Wenche Mohr.

This DCE would not have been such a great success without our two donors: **Equinor of Norway and Ignacy Łukasiewicz's PNGiG S.A. Foundation of Poland**. Words are not sufficient to express our gratitude for their invaluable contribution. Special thanks to the embassies, volunteers, and our guests who all brought their spirit of generosity, support and goodwill to the event.

On behalf of the co-organisers, I thank you all!

Anita Pratap



## *DCE 2022 Photo Gallery*



Colourful Mexico



Flavourful South Africa



Abundant Morocco



Amazing Thailand



Ukrainian Folk Costumes



Goodies at the Ukrainian Table  
And Wish List





International Forum's Table



An abundance of food!



Cosy Kosovo



Gorgeous Greece





Ukrainian Singers



Baltic Dancers



Pianist and opera singers





Slovakia and Indonesia



Beautiful Ghana



Showing off the fenalår!





Irish Coffee! Intoxicating...



Creative North Macedonia



Captivating Canada





Innovative Israel



Hungry for Hungary?



Poland



The Raffle Draw



Generous Palestine



Colourful Bosnia-Herzegovina

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Special Events visit to the Observatory at Solli

On a chilly November day, 27 Forum members and one husband were treated to a guided tour of the Observatory at Solli. We came in two groups, the first at 11:00 and the second at 12:00.



We were greeted by our guide, Anette Braathen, who works in the natural science department at the University of Oslo. We began the tour by a talk in the auditorium. We learnt about Christopher Hansteen (1784 – 1873), a Norwegian geophysicist and astronomer who worked at the University in Copenhagen. He moved to Oslo and wanted to build an observatory. But there was no money for this so he travelled to Siberia to do research on the magnetic poles of the earth. This research earned him status and funding for an observatory.

The building, in Empire style, was designed by architect Christian Heinrich Grosch (1801 – 1865), together with Christopher Hansteen, to function both as a scientific instrument and living quarters. It was completed in 1833 and is the oldest University building.

The hill at Solli, on which the observatory was built, was ideal for views in all directions. Hansteen moved in with his family and continued his work on magnetism and astronomy. Grosch was the most productive architect at the time, and designed the University, the Stock Exchange and much more.

The guide took us into the scientific wing of the house. We began in the rotunda which is a beautifully decorated circular room, with a gallery and very high ceiling. The main entrance to the building opens into this room, and here guests from the elite – royalty, scientists etc. – were received. Violins would be heard



playing from the gallery. On show were busts of Christopher Hansteen and famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546 – 1601), and globes, one showing the world and the other star formations in the sky.

As the city of Oslo expanded over the years, the resulting light pollution made it impossible to use the observatory at Solli so in 1934 it had to close. In 1954, a new solar observatory, constructed at Harestua in the hills north of Oslo, was ready for use. The old Observatory was completely restored in 2011 for the Oslo University's 200-year jubilee. The original colours and designs were then recreated.

From the rotunda we moved into the Meridian room. This room contained an enormous telescope (built on rock), a clock and other instruments. The walls can be opened to the north and south, the ceiling too, and the telescope will point in these directions. Anette opened the walls for us, explaining that the views were very different in 1833. On Lindøya, an island in the Oslofjord, we can still see the cairn on which Hansteen built on a spot exactly south of the observatory, which helped him aim the telescope southwards. He spent 11 years lying on a chair under the telescope, working out the exact position of Christiania (Oslo) on planet earth. He also established the zero-point longitude, the prime meridian, used for measuring time differences around the world.



Globe Showing Countries



Globe with Star Formations

However, after The International Meridian Conference in Washington in 1884, the observatory at Greenwich, London, took over the prime meridian, and Greenwich Mean Time became established. At the same time, the French obtained approval for use of metric measurements worldwide. Hansteen's work was very important for standardising time and making correct maps, navigations and measurements. He also helped with meteorology.

Then Anette took us up in to the circular dome-shaped room at the very top where there was another telescope. The roof could be opened and rotated, enabling Hansteen to study the sky from all directions. He also studied the sun, and when it was at its highest point, he could tell the people in the city and sailors on the fjord that it was 12:00 – a large orange ball was hoisted at 11:45 and at noon it was lowered. When it was cloudy, he had a very accurate clock to help him. The original mechanism of the room is still functioning, so some of the ladies had a go at turning the roof. Heavy work!

Downstairs Anette took us through the living quarters of the Hansteen family, also beautifully restored. Our tour ended here, and we thanked Anette for her excellent guiding and presented her with a gift of wine. We felt truly privileged to be shown around this wonderful building and learn about Christopher Hansteen's work.



The Observatory Roof



Telescope in Meridian Room

Many thanks to the Special Events Committee for arranging this tour.

Rosemary Hauge



## COOKING GROUP

A big *thank you* to Lene Siger for a wonderful pre-Christmas lunch. The ladies really enjoyed a three-course lunch with a French twist.

I would also like to thank the ladies for being such a wonderful group, presenting us with good food. Despite many years of learning from each other, we still enjoy having new recipes added to our collection of recipes!



Lunch is served!



Hostess Lene



We decided to drop the baking day this year and we will meet again in February 2023. Wishing every one of you a Merry Christmas and hoping for a peaceful year to come 2023.

Warm regards,

Liss Laan



Sunrise in Oslo in December seen from the Royal Castle,  
or was it sunset?





## 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:**

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: January 3, 2022