



## **EUFORIA**

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#### **Regional Director's Report**

Since the Regional Conference in Baden Baden I have continued to travel on behalf of Europe, but I have also been on holiday, which involved yet more travelling!

I accepted an invitation to Estonia at the end of August for a meeting of both their chapters, which amounts to a State Meeting really. Arriving on the day before the official meeting, I was met by Margarita (the State President). We spent the evening with Antoinette (Teta) Minuzzo and her friend Margaret, who 'just happened' to be in Tallinn as part of a Baltic tour. The following day, we all attended the meeting, which was held in the Education Room at the Outdoor Museum. I was very impressed by the progress which had already been made with SAP; chairs of various committees outlined their aims and the means by which they planned to achieve them. We were entertained with some regional music, played on traditional instruments. An MP came to tell us about the challenges of being a woman in parliament. She is convinced that the main weakness about parliamentary procedure is that other MPs don't read briefing documents properly, if at all! I had been asked to emphasise the international aspects of DKG, so I outlined my own story about the increase in my international visits, friends and outlook since becoming fully involved at regional and international levels, as well as with my own chapter and state.

In mid-September we took a 'proper' holiday – 24 days on the P & O Aurora. Sailing from Southampton, we crossed the Atlantic to New York, where the ship moored within walking distance of Times Square. This gave me 2 days in which to see the 'lie of the land' and to visit some highlights which I might not manage next July. Towards the end of October, another flurry of DKG commitments took over. I went to Amsterdam for a 'handover meeting' between the Steering Committees of the last and next European Regional conferences. These meetings are a valuable way of sharing experience, answering questions, and passing on detailed reports about successful (and otherwise) aspects of the planning and organisation of the most recent conference. The following weekend took me to Tampere in Finland to attend the November meeting of the Forum committee. Detailed plans were made for the Forum meeting in New York and extended discussions held about what our Forum is trying to achieve.

After two days back home I was off to Texas for a series of meetings held over three days. As RD for Europe, I serve 'ex officio' on the Committee of the International Speakers Fund. The opportunities provided by this fund are relatively under-used at present. Our plans included ways in which to advertise what an asset the fund can be. We looked at ways to widen the scope of the brief given to speakers and decided that they could be requested as speakers at group meetings of chapters as well as at State Meetings. Speakers could even be involved in meetings or conferences run by outside organisations in partnership with DKG, resulting in a quality speaker as well as promoting the Society at the same time. My second meeting was with International President, Jensi Souders, Executive Director, Corlea Plowman, Executive Director and the other four Regional Directors. We shared the best and worst moments of our respective Regional Conferences and discussed experiences and ideas which might help with future planning.

The remaining two and a half days were spent on the agenda for the Administrative Board! Following the receipt of confirmation of the 'Actions Taken' by the Board after my return, my most recent task has been to write to State Presidents in Europe with some commentary and background explanation about the significance and impact of the major items.

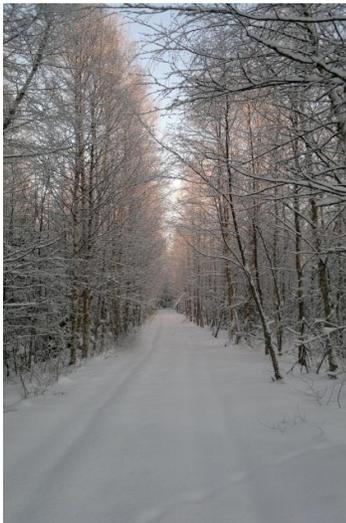
On the final day of the Board meeting, we were all given our allocations for visits as Society representatives to State Meetings in 2012. I was delighted to see that I will be able to attend the Great Britain Conference in March as well as going to Finland and Michigan in an official capacity. I hope to be able to attend other State Meetings in Europe as a visitor as well during 2012.

**Kate York (Regional Director)**

## **FINLAND**

Wishing you all a very happy New Year 2012 from Finland! After a very mild autumn we are finally enjoying a full winter with lots of snow but fortunately only mild minus temperatures.

We are busy preparing our State Convention in Turku on March 31<sup>st</sup>. After the General Annual meeting has taken place we will hear our guest speaker Senior Researcher Mrs. Elisa Poskiparta from the University of Turku tell us about a famous project against bullying at schools called "KivaKoulu". The school I personally work in has taken part in this project from the beginning and we can see the results in practice! It really works!



We welcome all our sisters all over Europe to join us for an informative and relaxing weekend in Turku, Finland!

It's very important to know what happens at state as well as chapter level but at the same time it's quite difficult to inform all your members and some never receive even the most urgent of messages. Our State organization has tried to tackle this problem

by following the example of many of our peer European states by sending out our very first "Finland Newsletter" just at the beginning of the New Year. By doing this we hope to reach most of our members and also to encourage them to share their ideas and activities on the chapter level with all of us.

Our Gamma-chapter in Turku has started a project for Mentoring Early Career Educators. The committee members, Anne-Marie Salonen, Liisa Seppälä and Marja-Leena Niitemaa, are all experienced teachers with a lot to give as mentors. The committee met with professor Soili Keskinen from the Faculty of Education at the University of Turku to discuss the possibilities of mentoring and getting into contact with the right people. Since the university has launched an official mentoring project (called VERME) this past autumn focusing on mentoring people who have worked as teachers for less than five years, the committee and professor Keskinen thought it would be a good idea for our members to focus on university students studying education. At the moment, the committee is busy planning their first meeting.

We are all looking forward to seeing you at one of the DKG events coming up soon!

With wintery greetings from Finland, **Taina Hokkanen State President, DKG Finland**

## **THE NETHERLANDS**

End of January, start of the winter in the Netherlands. Severe cold is foretold for the coming week(s) so Holland will be an ice skating nation. Provided there is not too much snow coming down. We are looking forward to eating pea soup and sauerkraut with bacon and smoked sausage our 'winter' food.

Also we are looking forward to our next Regional Convention in 2013. The convention will actually be held in Amsterdam. The meeting place will be a school that will give us plenty of room to organise workshops and presentations. The hotel we have found is at a 500 meter walk and it is brand new. It was opened only last December. The location is next to the railway station. Trains, trams and buses bring you to the city centre within 10 minutes. Another 10 minutes by train takes you to Schiphol Airport. And the most attractive feature is that prices are very reasonable (especially when compared with New York). So you understand we are very excited and we hope to meet all our European members in Amsterdam first week of August 2013.

But first there is 2012 to live through. We are organizing our state convention on May twelfth in a monastery in the old province town of Zwolle. Of course you are all very welcome to join us. New chapter presidents will be introduced and we will have a wonderful key note speaker. Lyn Schmid is visiting from International and she will go to Germany afterwards, to join the German convention.

New York will be the next stop for a number of us and there we will meet the new International President. How fast time flies. Wishing you all the best and hoping to see many of you in 2012.

**Ria Bleeker, State President, The Netherlands.**

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

Here's to a happy 2012 for everybody.

No doubt we will all meet up at one or other European State Conferences - and we warmly invite everybody to GB State Conference 23rd-25th March. This year our venue is a mediaeval Carmelite priory on the banks of the River Medway near Maidstone in Kent and costs less than £100 for the whole weekend including accommodation and all meals. Great value! Our keynote speaker, Dr Jacqui Ashton Smith, is a well-known education specialist in Autism and will share her research on how autism manifests itself in girls and their particular educational needs. Just email me or any other GB member as we are very happy to welcome you to our homes.

Like many of you, we are working hard in Britain to increase membership, with some moderate success. We find that a personal invitation to come to a chapter presentation is the best way of bringing in new members. Fingers crossed for a significant increase, but any ideas from other States are more than welcome.

Our chapters are pursuing various ways to support the DKG/Unicef, 'Schools for Africa' project. These include, donations instead of Christmas cards, sale of books, walnuts, home-made produce and viewing the film 'The First Grader' at a member's home, complete with passing around the hat at the end. We hope to raise a decent amount for the project, even in this serious financial climate!

We are looking forward to the Convention in New York and meeting with friends old and new.

Best wishes to all,

**Sheila Roberts, GB State President**

The deadline for receiving reports, articles etc., for the Summer edition of EuForia is 28<sup>th</sup> May when I hope we will be sharing news of our State Meetings as well as fund raising ideas for the 'Schools for Africa' project among other news.

**Joan Carroll, Editor**

