

Daughter recalls mother who hid Jews from Nazis

SURVIVOR: She helped Jewish families escape occupied Denmark.

By Jomay Steen
Journal staff

When Anna Kristensen was a 12-year-old girl on a farm near Olgod, the German Army marched into Denmark. The following five years of the occupation molded her for a lifetime, her daughter said.

As a Danish teenager, she risked her life to help Jewish families stow away on fishing boats, injecting the children with serum

to help them sleep on the boat ride, which smuggled them into Sweden and away from the Holocaust.

"It was a source of pride for my parents that they were able to get almost the entire Jewish population out of Denmark," said Elsie Tomlinson, Anna's daughter.

Anna Kristensen Urup van der Geest died Thursday in Rapid City.

Like her husband, Jack van der Geest, a Holocaust survivor and author, Anna, too, lived through the German occupation of Denmark. She had the memory of the flames and billowing black clouds of smoke wafting into the countryside when the Nazis marched into her hometown, Tomlinson said.

Yet, she hardly ever discussed these World War II events with

her family or grandchildren while they grew up in Vermillion and Rapid City, Tomlinson said.

It was something from her mother's past, she said.

Her mother lived on a small farm with her German mother and Danish father, who died when the girl was 14.

"It was traumatic for her. It was a tough time to grow up," Tomlinson said.

The German army set up a post on a corner of the family's farmstead. The Germans hired Anna's mother to do administrative work. "My grandmother did a bit translating, but not any more than she had to," she said.

Tomlinson recently discovered that her mother had known Claus von Stauffenberg, a failed conspirator who tried to assassinate Adolf Hitler. He was

stationed at the army base near the family's farm. "He was a Nazi, but he was not unkind," Tomlinson said.

Tomlinson's mother and Thomas Urup, her father, both worked with the Danish underground. She said they would never specifically say what actions or details were involved in the missions that they undertook. But Tomlinson said they suggested that the things that they did involved risk. "When they built buildings, they sabotaged the masonry to weaken the structure," she said.

Her parents married, and after the war, Urup wanted to emigrate to the United States. Her mother was pregnant with Tomlinson, and "it wasn't possible for her to go," Tomlinson said.

In 1946, Thomas Urup left for

America and established a home, living in Vermillion. His wife and daughter arrived in 1950, where they all became naturalized citizens.

"They felt the U.S. was the best place on earth," Tomlinson said.

After her father's death, her mother moved to Rapid City to be closer to her family.

"She then met Jack, fell in love and married. They had a great life with each other," Tomlinson said.

Both of her parents and her stepfather risked so much because they saw people, rather than a race or religion, she said.

"They often said 'Whether they were Jews or not, they were all Danes,'" Tomlinson said.

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Stocking up



Aaron Rosenblatt/Journal staff

Bradly Ray Hanson, front, waits for his friend, Matt Schneider, back right, to catch up while walking home from a nearby gas station along S.D. Highway 44 just east of Race Track Road in Rapid City on Monday. Each afternoon, the friends buy snacks at the gas station. On Monday afternoon, they bought candy, Monster drinks and a 12-pack of Coke.

Thune makes pitch for biennial federal budget

By Steve Young
Sioux Falls Argus Leader

Sen. John Thune calls the spiraling federal deficit "the biggest threat we face as a nation" and said he has introduced legislation to try to rein it in.

Speaking Monday at the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce's Inside Washington forum, the Republican senator said he introduced a bill before Congress went on recess that would create a committee to root out wastefulness in government spending.

Thune said the permanent standing committee would be formed of U.S. senators and representatives, Democrats and Republicans, tasked with finding at least 10 percent in spending reductions each budget cycle.

Thune also pitched the possibility of a biennial federal budget that would be passed in odd-numbered years, when people aren't running for office.

In even-numbered years, legislators could provide more oversight and perhaps reduce wasteful spending, he said. As it is, Congress tries to govern a \$4 trillion budget each year through 12 appropriations bills, most of which never get passed, Thune said.

"I think we're at a tipping point in the country," he said of predictions that \$5.8 trillion in publicly held debt will double in five years and triple in a decade. "We have five years or so to turn it around. If we don't, we'll reach a point that is very, very precarious ... very dangerous."

Asked about the uncertainty about tax cuts put in place under President George W. Bush that are scheduled to expire, the senator said he expects Congress to debate that issue when it returns from recess.

Thune said he thinks Democrats will seek to allow those cuts to expire for people making more than \$250,000 a year but extend them for people making less than that.

Mountain climber reaches milestone

By Dalton Walker
Sioux Falls Argus Leader

An old photo of Gary Halma hangs on the wall near the kitchen area of his rural Brandon home. He is standing on the summit of a Colorado mountain he once described as his nemesis before that summer day about 12 years ago.

The mountain, named Longs Peak, is one of Colorado's 54 mountains that stretch higher than 14,000 feet. The group of mountains are more famously known as the Colorado Fourteeners.

Earlier this week, the 59-year-old Halma climbed Mount Bierstadt, the last of the 54 he set out to scale periodically over the past 14 years. In all, he had 59 successful climbs.

"With each mountain you climb, you become more confident," he said. "After climbing 20 of them, I thought it was actually possible to climb them all." While Mount Bierstadt was the last, it's Long Peak that is perhaps the most memorable for the former Sanford Health anesthesiologist. The 14,255-foot mountain turned Halma back twice — the only times he didn't reach the summit of a Fourteener mountain in his 61 tries.

Halma said he was stuck in a tent his first try taking cover from heavy rainfall that lasted eight hours. The second effort ended after he injured his ankle while climbing past a boulder field.

"It took three tries before I finally seen that summit," he said.

Jay Heeter, a campaign coordinator for the Colorado Mountain Club, an organization that works with people in their effort to climb mountains in the state, said many of the Fourteeners can be hiked by an experienced hiker, but some require rope and other climbing tools.

An official tally of how many people have climbed all 54 doesn't exist, Heeter said. It depends whom you ask, he said. Halma's guess



Dalton Walker/Sioux Falls Argus Leader

Rural Brandon resident Gary Halma stands in his mountain climbing gear near his home Aug. 13. Halma climbed all 54 Colorado mountains that exceed 14,000 feet. The mountains are known as the Colorado Fourteeners.

is between 1,500 and 2,500.

But one thing that is certain, Heeter said, is that climbing the Fourteeners is quickly becoming a growing sport.

"It's something that can become addictive after doing enough of them," Heeter said. "It starts to be something of a worthy goal."

Halma retired from Sanford two years ago after 23 years. He is a former marathon runner and still logs a some miles a day.

Halma's wife, Ahva, a local dance instructor, said she was worried that once Halma retired he would slow down his physical activity, but that obviously didn't happen.

"I believe in physical activity," she said. "I told him I didn't want him sitting around. When we met in college, he ran 9 miles a day. He still does. He always runs, so now he's going up and running." Halma said he has climbed 28 of the 54 Fourteeners over the past three years, mostly because of the free time his retirement gives him.

Halma's training, besides

running, consists mostly of exploring the area around and on his property that features steep cliffs and other obstacles.

August is usually when Halma dedicates a couple weeks to his mountain climbing. The mountains are mostly dry during that time of the year, he said. He carries a backpack filled with climbing gear, nutrition bars and water. The pack weighs about 15 pounds at the heaviest, he said.

Most climbs can take a half day, Halma said. Some of the mountains are so secluded from towns that most climbers camp a few days and climb two or three during that time, he said.

His climbing team varies but usually consists of three or four people from the Sioux Falls area.

"I don't know exactly why I choose this sport," Halma said. "I know I've always been up to the physical challenge. I was a natural climber, and I loved doing it."

Reach Dalton Walker at 977-3925.

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