

2015 ICPAN Conference: My “F.A.I.R.Y.” Tale Experience in Denmark

By Helen Fong, MSN, RN

Denmark, voted as the “happiest place in the world” since 1973¹ was the venue for the 3rd ICPAN conference. It is reminiscent of canals, cobbled stone walkways, castles, gothic architecture that dates back hundreds of years and numerous bikes all over the country. It is home to “Tivoli” the first “happiest place on earth, founded by Georg Carstensen in 1843.² Walt Disney visited the park a century later and decided to follow his creative imagination for Disneyland and Disney World theme Parks based on Tivoli Gardens.

Denmark boasts of men and women who made great contributions to the worldwide society like astronomer Tycho Brahe, Physicist Niels Bohr, Nobel Laureate Henrik Pontoppidan, just to name a few. But most especially Hans Christian Anderson who brought us many “fairy tale stories” that we still pass on to our children and grandchildren.

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersens’ fairy tales, I have decided to share my “F.A.I.R.Y.” tale experience in Denmark. Let me start my story....

F is for Friends.

The Conference was a venue, not only to create new friends but also to reconnect with old friends and colleagues globally. It was great to chat with Jilda Levene from Australia who was also one of the speakers for the concurrent session. I used to work with Jilda in Royal Perth Hospital fifteen years ago. It was also a surprise to meet another colleague from Cedar’s Sinai, Los Angeles. Furthermore, it was such a delight to network again with several of the PANAC and ASPAN members who were there as delegates and some as speakers for the conference. Seventy nurses represented the American delegation. Twenty-two countries were represented with Denmark having the largest delegation. There were a total of 419 delegates to the ICPAN conference.

A is for Accommodation.

Bente Buch and Anne Wiebert coordinated the arrangement for “Nurse B&B” that was offered during the conference. My superb accommodation were hosted by **Anette Løvschall Mørch** with her husband Henrik. The cultural exchange and fellowship with them and their 2 daughters, Louise and Christine, together with Simon, Louise’s boyfriend and their 2 cats made our stay a memorable one. We were able to join their celebration for Christine’s 20th birthday. The morning started with a special breakfast and the Danish flags were adorned in the dining room/kitchen. We learned that Danish flags are flown to signify birthday celebrations.³ Anette and Henrik were so generous in their hospitality. Henrik, who is a good cook, always prepares a sumptuous meal for us every night and Anette, who is equally a good cook, prepares a hearty breakfast before we head on to the conference.

Anette works at Aleris Hamlet for seven years, a private hospital with about 31 to 40 surgeries done in a day. She made it possible for us to visit her beautiful hospital and toured us in the seven operating rooms and nine recovery rooms. I love the airy feeling

with high ceiling and glass rooftops in the recovery room. Patients have their own rooms and there were several surgical waiting areas where families can have coffee, tea and some Danish breads and sandwiches.

I is for “**ICPAN**” Conference

Aside from the hospital tour in a private hospital provided by Anette, I had the privilege to get a hospital tour in a public hospital. I chose Rigshospitalet, which is the largest hospital in Denmark, a 1,200 bed capacity with six treatment centers. I visited the neurosurgery department which has five operating room and 3300 cases done in a year. The capacity and structure of the hospital is hugely different from Aleris Hamlet.

The Conference started with a Mayor's reception at the city Hall. The Mayor's representative welcomed us to the city of Copenhagen and offered a delicious array of pancakes (crepes) in several flavors. This was also a great time of networking with the global delegates to the conference. It was very obvious how many of the Korean delegation came as they were wearing their Korean costumes.

The following day, the conference was opened with a mini-musical on the life of Hans Christian Anderson and a sampling of his fairy tales, which represented significant events in his life, and the life of the Danish people. I have never thought that there is a correlation between nursing and Thumbelina. But the singer reminded us that though Thumbelina was small, she has a big heart in caring for others. She was the “nurse” who cared for the swallow.

Dr. Allie Green gave the opening keynote address. She shared her experience in starting up a recovery room in Ethiopia. Her inspiring talk showcased her passion to provide quality care to patients. On the other hand, Denise O'Brien gave closing keynote address regarding the role of CNS in the recovery room.

The two and a half days were filled with concurrent sessions ranging from pain managements to evidenced based practices globally which impacts nursing care in the preop, intraop and postop. Poster walks consists of research done by nurses in many countries represented in the delegation. The ice cream research received much accolades both by the participants and the ICPAN Board.

Joni Brady facilitated the global collaboration and comparison on periop nursing care. It was the first time that technology was used to do a survey on the periop nursing practice globally. Questions were asked and participants' answers were tabulated and shown on the screen immediately. The results of the survey will be used to plan for the future ICPAN conferences.

R represents “**Rest and Relaxation**”

One would be remiss if they do not take the time to venture into the magnificent sights of Denmark and the neighboring country of Sweden. Immediately after the Inaugural meeting of the Transitional ICPAN Board, we took the train to Malmö. There we enjoyed a canal boat ride in Malmö and saw the many gothic buildings of Sweden. We also took the time to savor the Swedish flavor in a local restaurant which was located in their town square.

The next day, our planned sightseeing tour of Denmark was dampened by the wet rain and the marathon. We did manage to see some sights and a short five minute photo shoots with the mermaid in the pouring rain. In the afternoon, when the rain finally stopped, we managed to have time for shopping and a foot spa where Turkish fishes had a delightful festive meal on our dead skin cells.

Bente Buch, in her opening remarks, mentioned that she prayed for sunny days during the conference. God did let the sun shine for 3 days and the rain came on the 4th day. We had hoped that Bente could have prayed for more sun shine than the 3 days she had asked for. However, we still had an enjoyable day in spite of the rain.

Y represents **yoghurts** (skyr), cheese and baked breads; **Yearn** for future ICPAN conference.

The food in Denmark is one of a kind. We savored different types of cheeses and skyr (a form of Icelandic yogurt). Baked breads are always present on every meal. Radisson Blu Hotel provided a wide variety of delicious meals and snacks to all the conference attendees.

My “F.A.I.R.Y.” tale continues to unfold as I “**yearn**” for more ICPAN conference. Could it be in Korea or Australia? Who knows? But bidding has started for the next venue of ICPAN conference and will be revealed after January 2016.

I would like to thank the ASPAN Board for the scholarship given to me to attend the 3rd ICPAN conference. It was a very memorable F. A. I. R. Y. tale experience for me.

References

1. Happiest Place in the World. Available at: <http://denmark.dk/en/meet-the-danes/work-life-balance-the-danish-way/happy-danes/>. Accessed Sept 16, 2015.
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