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THEA FOSS

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grew up in the family business, the Seattle-based, and now lives in Alaska. "It's amazing how far out it reached."

"This film did indeed create a big ripple in Puget Sound when she brought a rehearsal for it and launched a machine because that would become a regional success story."

But while her name is now fairly familiar even to Tacoma school children, when Foss and co-producer Lucy Osteruder made "Finding Thea," it was hard to find folks who even realized she was a real person, in this town's sporting meadow days.

"People didn't really know her story," Foss said.

"When she passed in 2001 that the Box Historical Society museum was planning a Thea Foss exhibit, she knew she wanted to make a film for it and for the community."

The result was a 24-minute documentary co-produced with Lucy Osteruder that tells Thea's story from her roots in poverty-stricken Latvia, Norway, through her migration to the Midwest and finally her move to Tacoma with husband Andrew and their small children.

Then, in 1990, her off-the-shelf seafood purchase led to a prosperous business bringing people and goods around Puget Sound.

Foss's film, supported by the Support Museum, premiered there and was screened at the first Tacoma Film Festival, then at PBS and KSTU television.

In 2008, it was picked up for a touring exhibit for the Eastern Historical Society (Pac Northwest), and in 2009, made it onto Norwegian state television, where playwright Erlend Lofthansen saw it and was inspired.

"I was curious," said Lofthansen, 71, of why she decided to do his story into a play for her company, Thea Lofthansen, which produces historical plays outdoors every year.

"We all have ancestry in the family that went to the U.S., mostly in the Midwest or Pacific," she said. "Nearly 30,000 left Norway every year, but not as many of our women because entrepreneurship."

"The thing about Thea is that she came from the present, professional directors and 24 amateur actors (including children), were into rehearsal this spring, painting local markets in the film green and white, and building a set for their cinematic stage near Skiptvet's 19th-century Lofthansen."

"Thea's Lofthansen" is a one-hour performance with a multi-thread in re-enactment of 19th-century Norway beforehand — will run from Aug. 27 to Aug. 30.

Like Haley's film, the play will



The Foss building, circa 1900, where the Foss family lived and where Foss, Tag and Leanne Co. was begun by Thea Foss, Andrew, Thea and their daughter Ulleva are standing on the stairs.



Rehearsals take place in Skiptvet, Norway, for the outdoor play "The Other Country," based on the story of Norway-born immigrant Thea Foss.



Lofthansen

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independence that worked for the good of all — is what pulled Thea and Lofthansen into Foss' story.

"She was definitely a woman before her time, a feminist," Foss said. "The man Andrew Foss was a lovely man, but it was her loving, creative, motherly spirit that brought endurance to their early years."

"She was a strong," added Lofthansen, who was fascinated by the fact that Thea and her sister Andrew's brother, then his sister, in America to join him before earning her own passage.

Lofthansen was also struck by how Thea founded the Daughters of Norway despite losing three daughters of her own.

Haley, aided by the Support Museum, will go to Skiptvet and document the play's rehearsal and performance with video and photos for later presentation in Tacoma.

Leanne Foss will go with her husband, staying with the major and working with family she met on a previous trip.

"It's an remarkable how Thea's story has had such a ripple in Norway," said Foss, who wanted to work in Hollywood as a child and realized only as an adult how much influence her family had had on the region.

"Erlend is very talented, very inspired. It's his job to see what she comes up with."

And if she comes up with something that Tacoma audiences might like, there's a chance "Thea and Leanne" might come to our own waterfront.

Two local theater directors have expressed interest in reading the English script, and Support Museum director Wesley Westbark is enthusiastic about offering the historic waterfront waterfront space as a venue.

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"She was definitely a woman before her time, a feminist."

NANCY BOURNE HALEY, Tacoma filmmaker whose 2004 documentary "Finding Thea" inspired a new play about Thea Foss



Tacoma filmmaker Nancy Bourne Haley stands Aug. 13 near a replica of Thea Foss, the subject of her documentary "Finding Thea" that she made in 2004. It was picked up by Norwegian TV and inspired a Norwegian playwright to write a play about the notable seafarer. Thea Foss is credited with starting the family shipping business after emigrating from Norway to Tacoma in the 1890s century.

THEA FOSS GOING BACK TO THE OLD COUNTRY

New Norwegian play documents the life of Puget Sound pioneer

BY ROSEMARY POWERSKANG
Thea Foss is going back to Norway.

A new play about the 19th-century Norwegian — a Seattle woman who began one of Puget Sound's biggest local enterprises — will open Aug. 27 at an outdoor theater in Skiptvet, close to where Foss grew up. And it's all thanks to Tacoma

FIND OUT MORE

Film: "Finding Thea" is available on DVD from Tacoma 50-0101. For more information, see findthefilm.com.

Play: "Thea and Leanne" will open at the Lofthansen in Skiptvet, Norway, on Aug. 27. For more information, see lofthansen.com.

filmmaker Nancy Bourne Haley, whose 2004 documentary, "Finding Thea," inspired Norwegian playwright Erlend

Lofthansen to bring the entrepreneurial immigrant story back to the old country.

Haley, along with Foss' great-granddaughter Leanne Foss, will travel to Skiptvet this week to watch the play as it comes to life — and possibly to bring it to Tacoma.

It's a century-old story of sweat, creative women that just keeps unfolding.

"This is a ripple in the water that just keeps growing and growing," said Leanne Foss, who,



WATCH ONLINE

More on a recent from Tacoma filmmaker Nancy Bourne Haley's documentary "Finding Thea."

www.tnt.com

3 DAYS OF TALKS

Talks, apology defuse North, South Korea tension after blast

BY FORREST KILGUS AND HONGJIN KIM
The Associated Press

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA — South Korea has agreed to halt propaganda broadcasts at noon Sunday after North Korea expressed regret over a recent land mine blast that wounded two South Korean soldiers, the countries announced after three days of intense talks aimed at getting the rivals back from the brink of war.

During the talks at the border village of Panmunjom, North Korea also agreed to lift a "great-state-of-war" that it had declared last week, chief South Korean negotiator and presidential security adviser Kim Gwan-joo told a television briefing.

Kim said the two Koreas have also agreed to resume reunions of families separated by war. He said the countries will hold talks to improve their ties soon in either Seoul or Pyongyang.

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MARKET

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brandy, and how that might affect the U.S. economy, have been a big part of the U.S. volatility.

And it's not just China weighing on stock prices. Large developing nations such as Brazil are struggling to grow and in an interconnected world their problems eventually lead into international companies that manufacture their for the local market or export their from the United States. That hurts the bottom line of companies such as Germany's DAX or U.S. giant Caterpillar.

Europe and Germany, the world's premier exporter, also were hurt in the global sell-off. Germany's DAX is down a whopping 2.1 percent from April.

The United States grew at an annual rate of 2.3 percent from April through June and will be forced to pick up speed before the market bottom. The U.S. unemployment rate stood at 5.3 percent in July, and as long as the labor market remains so sticky, stock prices decline are unlikely to seriously dampen consumer confidence and spending.

See MARKET, A12



Trader T. Hill Cookson works at the New York Stock Exchange Monday. U.S. stock markets plunged in early trading following a big dip in Chinese stocks.

BAD MORNINGS

More than \$20 billion of market value was erased from the world's 100 biggest companies. A group of market dips got us going up to function. The largest technology stocks received a correction — in the space of a few minutes.

Such was the drama at the open of trading in the American equity market Monday, when values of global trading followed stocks with some unprecedented force. At its worst, about \$2.7 trillion of market value had been erased from U.S. shares before prices leveled off and the Dow Jones Industrial Average rebounded almost 1,200 points.

At one point the Standard & Poor's 500 index came within 34 points of selling off a marketwide circuit breaker that would've shut down trading for 15 minutes to restore order. More than 2 billion shares changed hands in the first 30 minutes, almost one-third of what usually trades in a day.

KOREA

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The North Korean Central News Agency also released the same details.

The announcement came after the second round of negotiations the rivals began September after events at their heavily guarded border pushed them toward a military confrontation.

Both sides had wanted a five-day truce to avoid an escalation that could lead to more bloodshed.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye on Monday said she would have a clear North Korea apology for the missile attack that claimed two soldiers, the anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts would announce.

Kim said the independent campaign, which began after the blast, would stop at noon Tuesday unless an "abnormal" event happens.

Pyongyang had denied involvement in the land mine explosions and rejected Seoul's report that Pyongyang launched an artillery barrage last week. It was not clear whether North Korea's expression of regret meant it was now admitting its involvement.