

## Fall, 2001 Newsletter

### • Your Museum is Up and Running!!

There's been a lot going on since the museum opening in June. Several groups came to view the "Saving of the Danish Jews" exhibit. Bus Load Groups included visitors from Houston Park Place Lutheran, Houston Fifth Ward, synagogues in Wharton and Bay City, the Jewish Community Center in Houston and one day a large group of our friends in the Palacios Historical Society showed up. It was also gratifying to have visitors from Corpus Christi, Round Rock, Edna and the Dallas area. And, we can't forget the fact that Ulrik Damm from Randers, Denmark paid a return visit.

Then, on August 18, a bus load of approximately 40 Scandinavians from Houston arrived by bus and joined your board and spouses for a wonderful evening of wine and great Danish food catered by Johnnie Larsen & Susi Ibsen.

We can heartily give them our recommendation! For your catering needs in a Danish style, give them a call (281) 316-1972. You may want to add this number to your telephone list for future needs!



## Danish Heritage Preservation Society

P.O. Box 386  
Danevang TX 77432-0386



The evening was put together by Danish Consul Ray Daughbjerg and Vice Consul Anna Thomsen. The event was the opening of the exhibit "Scandinavian Roots, American Lives" focusing on the emigration of Danes, Swedes, Norwegians and Finns to the United States. The exhibit was sponsored by the Nordic Council, so the consulates of all the Scandinavian countries were represented at the opening. Ray Daughbjerg used the upper landing of the Pierce/Harton stair to address the group. (Quite effective as a "Pulpit"!) Needless to say, a good time was had by all!

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- By the time you receive this newsletter, this "Emigration" exhibit will have been shipped to Elgin, Texas for exhibit there by a Swedish group, and "Saving of the Danish Jews" (the exhibit which we had from the opening in June until mid-August) is being exhibited at the Jewish Community Center in Omaha, Nebraska. These two exhibits were on loan as parts of a traveling exhibit schedule, just as is the current exhibit, "The Yellow Star" which is described later in this newsletter. It's great for our museum to be part of a system in which exhibits can be shared!

## • Museum “Open” Hours

Your museum is open every Sunday from 1 to 4 pm or for special groups of 8 or more by special arrangement. The Board at its meeting October 14 made two exceptions to this: The museum will not be open December 23 or 30, however, the museum will be open from 1 to 5:30 pm on Saturday, December 22 so visitors who wish to participate in the Christmas Program and the Tree Celebration by the Danevang Lutheran Church that evening will be able to do so.

## • Scheduling of Groups

Group tours are encouraged and the message needs to be circulated to groups in your area that the museum will open any day, or any hour for groups of 8 or more and these tours can be scheduled by contacting:

Sherry Larsen Green  
512-346-9717  
SKGLarsen@aol.com

or

Bridget Jensen  
713-524-2328  
aljense@fbtc.net

or

Homer Smith  
210-558-6865  
cherokeesat@earthlink.net

or

Elsie Christensen  
979-543-2106

## • A New Event

Your Board and Events Committee Chairman Leo Westerholm have decided to have another “Event” this year. Unfortunately, there are many in this world who have never heard of, or tasted, aebleskiver, so on November 24, from 1 to 4 there will be an aebleskiver party and at the same time everyone will be given the opportunity to make Danish Christmas decorations. This event will appeal to young and young-at-heart. Plan to be there and invite your friends. It’s up to you whether or not you explain “aebleskiver” to your friends. There will be a small charge for the “treats” and for

decorations materials. We’ve checked and the Aggie-Longhorn Game is at 11 am, Friday, and by Saturday most of the Thanksgiving turkey left-overs will be gone, so plan on aebleskiver.

## • With a Name Like That, He Can’t Go Wrong!!!

We’ve learned that Dane Brodsgaard, son of Denise and John Brodsgaard, is a National Merit Scholarship Semi-finalist. Dane is a senior at El Campo High School and one of the school officials was quoted in the paper as saying, “He has come from a good family.” We all knew that!!!!!!

We wish Dane good fortune in this competition.

## • Additions to the Flag Area

A new, larger light has been added to better illuminate the flags. Also, a Danish Vimpel (streamer) has been added to the Danish pole. When Janet Born, one of our members from Vanderbilt, Texas was in Denmark this year she brought back the streamer for our use. It is approximately 25 feet long (or, as the box said, 8 meters). It really is like a long, narrow Danish flag

Janet had been in Denmark to visit Ulrik Damm in Randers and later Ulrik made a second trip this year to the USA. Ulrik graciously translated the story of the flag as it is written on the box. **“The Oldest National Symbol of the World”** Denmark’s flag, Dannebrog (the flag of the Danes) is purported to be the oldest national symbol in history. According to Saxo, (who at the command of Absolon wrote the Saga of Denmark) King Valdemar (the Great) was on a crusade by Latvian bishops against the heathen Estonians. During the Volmer battle, in 1219 in Estonia, the flag fell from the heavens. This caused the warfare to turn into a lucky one for the Danish army, who eventually won the battle. King Valdemar died during the battle and some have said that his blood has given color to the flag, Dannebrog.”

## • “The Yellow Star” is in Danevang

Peachtree Publishers of Atlanta have published a wonderful award winning children’s book entitled, “The Yellow Star” and your museum has on display, now until the last week in December, twelve of the oil paintings used to illustrate this fine book, which carries a message of brotherhood and sisterhood of all peoples. Henri Sorensen of Aarhus, Denmark, has ably caught the loyalty and fearless spirit of the King of Denmark and his people during World War II when the Nazis threatened the Danish Jews. The author, Carmen Deedy, acknowledges that this situation gave rise to several legends and the most enduring of these has to do with the yellow star which the Nazis forced the Jews to wear. She has used this legend to create a powerful story of heroic justice.

The *El Campo Leader-News* gave good coverage, including a photo, of the presentation of a copy of this book by Society President Irvin Wind and Historian Helena Lauritsen to the El Campo Branch Library. Subsequently, Martha Chappel has made verbal presentations to teachers and because of that effort the El Campo Public Schools have purchased ten copies for classroom and library use.

The exhibit is well worth a visit, with or without children!!! [Books are available!](#)

## Volunteering Is “In” in Danevang

Elsie Christensen has been coordinating the efforts of the volunteer docents for the tours of the museum and she is pleased to announce that most of the board members and at least 21 non-board members have been involved in helping visitors during their tours.

### • More about Volunteers

Mickey Christensen, Merle Jensen and James Petersen continue to keep the grounds mowed and edged. Edging has just been made a lot better since Carl Larsen bought and donated a

Weed-eater that’s on wheels. This is a “slick”, new tool and we are grateful to both the donor and the users.

Carl Larsen and James Petersen have been hard at work building storage shelving in an effort to organize our artifacts which are not currently on display.

And, of course, several volunteers, under the direction of Museum Chairman Lawrence Petersen continue the important task of cataloging the accessions of the museum. We are fortunate that more and more persons are donating items to the museum for its collection and eventual display. However, don’t hold back. Please keep these items coming. Only with your cooperation will we have meaningful displays.

And, we can’t forget the interior of the museum. Recently Laverne Harton, Helena Lauritsen, Elaine Wind and Elsie Christensen joined Danevang resident Paula Chavez in a thorough cleaning of the museum. All of the ladies are convinced that the stair treads which were used from the Pierce Hotel had not been cleaned since the hotel was built in 1894.

Sherry Larsen Green is our “wildflower lady” responsible for getting a patch of wildflowers planted out along the highway. Gunnar Thyssen has religiously sprayed the strip all across the width of our property to try to rid it of clover, and Gunnar and Carl have “scratched” the ground just enough to allow the seeds to take root. We’ll just have to “wait and see” how good a job our flower farmers have done. If these flowers work out, we have plans to expand the wildflower area. Mickey and Merle aren’t fighting that idea since that just means less grass they have to mow.

Irvin Wind and Al Jensen continue the “weatherstripping” project which will also help control the cricket invasion. We now know something about what our ancestors had to deal with in the way of bugs!

## • An All-year Christmas Tree

Some visitors to the Heritage Museum may wonder that they are greeted by a “Danish-traditionally decorated” Christmas tree as they enter the museum. But to the Danes who treasure their traditions, they know that of all the celebrations surrounded by custom, Christmas ranks at the top.

Thanks go to the artistic talents and the dedicated work of Patty Jensen and her able helpers, Henrietta Bram, Laverne Harton, Bertha Jensen, and Elaine Wind.

Visitors can share in the enjoyment of the unique decorations and learn the custom of the dance around the Christmas tree.

One will notice the intricately-cut and woven red and white hearts. (This motif is also repeated in the quilt hanging high above, near the tree, by MaryAnn Wind.) In the days when candies, sweets and “pebbernodder” were a rare treat, these hearts were filled with these goodies and given to the children on Christmas Eve.

The myriad of twinkling lights are reminiscent of the glowing candles which lighted trees of old. In a few spots on the tree authentic antique candle holders, replete with red candles, all donated by Elaine Wind, can be seen. Beautifully hand crocheted snowflake designs are nestled between the branches.

Patty assures us that the Nisse made from pine cones, a painted wooden head and a red construction paper hat are not beyond almost everyone’s ability to make. Therefore, taking Patty’s word we are including supplies to make the Nissemen at our November 23rd Aebleskiver Day for those wanting to make some decorations for their own trees. Materials and instructions for making woven hearts will also be on hand.

Interestingly, at the recent Thyssen Family Reunion everyone gathered around the tree singing “Nu har vi Jul igen” in the middle of summer. This was only possible because of the great job done by Patty Jensen and her helpers. In the next newsletter, Patty will share the

experience of bringing us “Kristina”.

## • Cyber Volunteering

There are things going on “behind the scenes”. Dennis Wind is one of the “out-of-state” Winds. He lives in Lombard, Illinois, so it was no small feat that his cousin, Sherry Larsen Green, was able to twist his arm, or least talk kindly to him, and convince him that we really could use his computer expertise. He is working on a website which he explains will be mainly for members and friends. We feel that this site can be helpful in many ways. This is taking a lot of effort so it is not ready for unveiling yet, but to Dennis (and Sherry) we say “Mange Tak”.

In the meantime, we direct you to another website put together by Hannes Hofer, a long-time friend of our Society. Hannes has been the volunteer “webmaster” of the site for the Danish Club of Houston. Several months ago he agreed to help us out, also.

If you go to the Houston Club’s site at [www.dkhouston.org](http://www.dkhouston.org) you will be able to pull up photographs from Danevang as well as interesting links. Also, you will have the opportunity to see what is happening with the Danish Club of Houston. Hannes has faithfully included our newsletter and since the “copy” wasn’t always in electronic form, this was no small job.

Hannes also translated, for us, the sermon delivered at the funeral of Iver Wind, May 17, 1914. Considering the proximity of Irvin and Elaine’s Golden Wedding Celebration, we thought it was fitting to include something of Irvin’s heritage. Therefore, on the last page of this newsletter we have included excerpts of that sermon.

## New Exhibit

For November and December we plan to have on display old post cards and Christmas cards augmented by copies of Julenbog, dating to 1911, out of the museum collection. If you have any post cards and/or Christmas cards you wish to donate or loan just for this exhibit, please call Lawrence Petersen ASAP at 979-543-3005.

## • Gift Acknowledgements

Over the past few years public acknowledgements of memorials and gifts in honor of an event have not been made.

Thanks to the fine record keeping by the society's faithful treasurer, O.V. "Mickey" Christensen, we are able to correct that omission and in the future will keep up with current acknowledgements.

In Memory of:	By:
Wayne Anderson	Myrtle Waldman
Ingeborg Atchetee	Atchetee Estate
Walter Bram	M/M Sidney Armatta Marilyn Chappell M/M O.V. Christensen M/M Alvin Korenek M/M Milton Valigura M/M Erling Smith
Ruth Brodsgard	M/M Irvin Wind
Helen Farley	Margaret Wind
Anne Berndt Gardell	Gardell Estate
Ester Juhl Gray	Clara Stephens
Ervin J. Hansen	Myrtle Waldman
Melvin Hansen	M/M O.V. Christensen
Louise Hayes	Clara Stephens
Dorothy Hermansen	M/M O.V. Christensen M/M Alvin Jensen
"Red" Hermansen	M/M Alvin Jensen
John King	Dan. Soc. of Texas
Jeanette Larsen	Andrew Berndt M/M C. A. Berndt V.E. Birkman Fam. B.J. Bradley Ruth Brodsgard M/M O.V. Christensen Shelly Confad M/M Tony Danna M/M Eddie Jessinski M/M Wilbert Hansen M/M Vernor Harton Wade Harton M/M Alfred Jensen M/M Alvin Jensen Carl Larsen

In Memory of  
Jeanette Larsen  
(cont'd)

Jane Lesak  
Ted and Myrtle  
Longwood

M/M Axel Petersen  
Emil & Johanne  
Svensen  
Max Westerholm

Charles White  
Hilda White

By  
M/M L. Lauritzen  
M/M Wesley Miksik  
Milligan Family  
Nancy Rabb  
Mrs. G. Railsback  
Lillian Roberts  
Thelma Saatkamp  
Gunnar Thyssen  
M/M Albert Utt  
M/M H. Westerholm  
M/M Ellis Wind  
Margorie Wind  
Wind Brothers  
M/M O.V. Christensen  
Merle Teat  
M/M Milton Valigura  
Ruth Blanton  
Elnora Oglesby  
Jean Mickleson  
Irvin Petersen  
Mary Petersen  
Gudrun Jensen  
M/M/ O.V. Christensen  
Mrs. Philip Cotrella  
M/M Lynn Ervin  
M/M David Finley  
M/M Leonard Lauritzen  
M/M Jimmie Tinkle  
M/M H. Westerholm  
M/M John Westerholm  
M/M O.V. Christensen  
M/M O.V. Christensen  
Clara Stephens  
M/M Maurice Tunnell



## • Writings from the Past

In previous newsletters we have included some of the writings from the early days of Danevang. We wish to continue that from time to time so we are taking the liberty of sharing with you a letter sent to our Harvey Westerholm by Verner Petersen, transmitting a copy of the brown 1944 Jubilee Book. The museum has a copy of this book in its collection. The letter is dated July 12, 1974.

Dear Friend Harvey,

The enclosed Danevang Jubilee Book is yours to keep. The Jubilee Book was compiled mostly by my Dad. Many of the articles are in the Danish language. Mrs. Gerda Duus has translated a number of these to English and I have attempted to translate a few.

The Summary by P.J.A. Petersen is from the last page of the book and translated by me. I tried to keep Dad's thoughts in mind, especially the verse.

Some of the articles have a repetition, but are still individual.

Danevang 1908 by P.J.A.P. was written in Danish and later translated by Peter Harton.

History of St. Ansgar Congregation was translated by Rev. M. Mikkelsen.

From the World of Nature by L. Henningsen, the first pastor to serve the Danevang Congregation

Fruit Farming by F.P.J. Lund, one of the first teachers in the Danevang Public School. A well educated man with ability in many fields but not successful for himself. He went from here to the West Indies, returned a few years later and was employed by Texas A&M to do some agricultural research on a farm about two miles north of Midfield, west of Juanita Creek,

Thomas P. Christensen Topic: I have explained at the beginning of his article.

The Goals of the Pioneer by Pastor H.O. Jensen, translated by Mrs. Gerda Duus. This is, to me, a wonderful description of Danevang People.

The first person to buy land in Danevang was J.P. Olson. Mogensen built the first house. Soren Larsen plowed the first furrow. Marcus Nielsen attempted to operate the first grocery

store. The failure was due to having to haul supplies from El Campo over muddy roads. Nielsen owned and operated the first cotton gin (located just east of the Madsen farm that your parents farmed for several years). The gin was later sold to Peter (nicknamed Uncle Pete) Rasmussen and moved to Central Part of Danevang in 1909. Was almost destroyed by the 1909 hurricane,

Danevang is here to stay for a long time. Many young couples have built nice modern homes and are doing a good job of farming.

The Church will continue. Not as before. We have a new day and a new group in charge. This has to be O.K. We will accept this and be thankful that they have the interest to continue.

Your friend, Verner

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Excerpt from sermon delivered at Iver Wind's funeral, May 17, 1914

"Among those who wished to make peace, wished to live in peace, and had a good understanding of his fellow man, we found Iver Wind. He scarcely had an enemy and he wished to reach his goals using the good. Iver Wind belongs among those who are leaving us bright memories. He was the helpful one. The other day when I talked to him for the last time, he told me it was that time again, where the mosquitoes were going to be a nuisance for the animals, so we best keep them indoors; but then he added: do you need any feed. Here is another example of his helpful way of thinking, for this was not the first time I had encountered it. If Iver Wind saw, or rather met a person in need, he was happy to help. He had not forgotten from his own experiences that disappointment, sorrows, misfortune and misery could weigh down a person. Because he remembered that, he was the helpful one. Because Iver Wind was a good man, we will all miss him even more..... Family, you have much to be thankful for. To have grown up in a home where you always saw two people who through good and bad times shared happiness and sorrows. Two people who were striving to do the best for you."

Dates to mark on your calendars (or put this on your refrigerator):

Saturday, November 24, 2001 1 to 4  
Aebleskiver Fest w/ Decorations

Work Shop

Saturday, December 22, 2001 1 to 5:30  
Museum Open, followed by

Church Program and Tree  
Museum will not be open Sunday,  
December 23 or 30, 2001

Saturday, April 20, 2002 Time to be  
determined Queen's Birthday

Saturday, June 1, 2002 Time to be  
determined Grundlov's Dag &

Annual Meeting