

# Danish Club of Houston News



www.dkhouston.org - info@dkhouston.org  
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## Thanks

We would like to thank our generous sponsors who donated money for the reception in connection with the Dance Salad Festival. It would not have been possible without your help.

Maersk Oil & Gas, Richard Doidge  
Torben Riis  
Royal Danish Consulate  
Danish Club of Houston  
Ocean Shipping, Keld Nielsen  
Heritage Realty, Ghislaine Thomsen

We also would like to thank Anna Holliday for arranging the reception.

## Board Position

The Danish Club of Houston is looking for a person interested in becoming our new Secretary. Please, contact any of the current Board members for more information.



## Summer's Here

As you may remember, our last issue was our first digital-only issue. Based on the responses we received, we are going to stay digital. As always we welcome comments and suggestions for the newsletter.

The weather is sunny and hot again and another hurricane season is right around the corner. The last few months saw some very different events in the Danish Club.

In January we had another Brunch, which was very successful once again. Everybody who attended had a good time. We are planning more brunches in the future.

The last Sunday in February was Fastelavn. More on that event on page 3.

Anna Holliday hosted a Hurricane Preparedness Seminar at her home in March. We want to thank the good folks from Harris County Homeland Security & Emergency Management for helping us out. They provided some very useful

information.

April saw Danish Dancers visiting Houston to participate in the Dance Salad Festival. Turn to page 3 if you missed it.

Also, the Queen's Birthday was celebrated in Danevang, see page 2.

Two housekeeping items. Our Secretary, Mette Miller, is resigning and the Board is looking for a person interested in taking over that position. Don't feel shy, speak up. We have a lot of fun on the Board.

We are also looking for a volunteer for the Church Council at the Norwegian Seaman's Church. The Danish member is resigning in July. Contact any Board member if you are interested.

Hope to see you all at our Sommerfest in June. Have a great and fun Summer.

*Lillian Jensen*



## The Queen's Birthday Celebration in Danevang, April 22, 2006

Saturday April 22nd was a beautiful spring day in Danevang, as crowds gathered once again for the annual celebration in honor of Queen Margrethe's birthday. The day was packed with activities, as the regular crowd from Houston and Danevang - more than 100 in all - was joined by a busload of 7th graders from El Campo.

The day started with casual greetings over coffee and coffeecake. The Scandinavian Folkdancers of Houston took to the floor at 11:00 and danced for nearly an hour, in-

cluding numerous opportunities for the audience to join in the fun and learn some new dances. Lunch, consisting of deliciously Danish frikadeller, medisterpølse, red cabbage, potato salad, and agurkesalat, with coffee and æblekage for dessert, was followed by a brief speech by visiting Danish Pastor Kirsten Drigsdahl about the relationship between the Queen and the Danish populace, and then led the group in a toast to the Queen for her (belated) birthday. Bridget Jensen led the group in singing some classic Danish favorites, ac-

companied by pianist Bob Olsen from Grace Lutheran Church in Houston. The kids were kept occupied with games outside, including a water-balloon toss.

Also being Earth Day, films on the subject were shown in the church, and later the El Campo 7th graders performed "Number the Stars", a play about the rescues of the Danish Jews during World War II. Of course, the Museum was open for all to visit throughout the day.



Pastor Drigsdahl talking to the crowd.



Everybody singing "Kong Christian" and preparing to toast the Queen.

## CALENDAR

June 24:  
Sommerfest and Annual Meeting  
at Nottingham Country Club

August/September:  
Brunch, place and time to be  
determined.

September/October:  
Immigration Seminar, place and  
time to be determined.

December:  
Christmas Party

December:  
Julegudstjeneste



## Danish Dancers at Festival in Houston, Texas

This year the internationally renowned dance festival, "Dance Salad", featured two Danish acts. The dance festival lasted 3 days and took place just before Easter in Houston. This year's "Dance Salad" was a great success with about 950 - 1000 people in the audience for every performance.

The Royal Danish Ballet presented "Les Bras de Mer", performed by Silja Schandorff and Jean-Lucien Massot, and the New Danish Dance Theatre put on "Silent Steps" with dancers Hilary Briggs, Laura Lohi, Stine Maartensson, Kenneth Carlson, Dan Langeborg and Philip Schmidt. The Royal Danish Embassy in Washington D.C. sponsored the participation of the Danish artists. In connec-

tion with the festival the choreographer from the New Danish Dance Theatre, Tim Rushton, took part in "Choreographer's Forum" at the Museum of Fine Arts, where 400 people with a keen interest in dance showed up.

On Friday April 14th, the Danish Consulate and the Danish Club in Houston hosted a "Danish Evening". The show was followed by a reception in "The Green Room" at the Wortham Theatre.



The event was attended by approximately 150 guests who got the opportunity to meet the dancers. The Danish Consulate, the Danish Club and Danish companies based in Houston sponsored the reception.

## Fastelavnsfest

This year's Fastelavnsfest was held at Hermann Park's Lowe Pavilion on February 26, where approx. 30 families attended. We were incredibly lucky with the weather which was beautiful, sunny and warm after a week of cold and rain!

We started off meeting at 10:00am with coffee for the adults and juice for the kids while the kids enjoyed the playgrounds and the grownups settled in and had a chance to mingle and catch up with old and new friends. Lisbeth Mogensen showed up with her home baked "fastelavnsboller". The boller were truly scrumptious, some with chocolate, some with strawberry and

some with marzipan inside. We all rushed to taste these delicious treats and there was plenty for all! Many thanks to Lisbeth for baking the Danish traditional wienerbrød and not least for getting up very early that morning to do so!

Then Honey Dew the clown came to visit. She brought her pet rabbit, Oreo and pet ferret which was well appreciated by the children who were allowed to pet and cuddle the animals. Honey Dew knew a lot of tricks too. She made balloon shapes for the kids and they all got a face painting as well.

At last it was time to "slå katten af tønden". We had two lines for

the batting – one for the girls and one for the boys. This year's barrels were quite robust. It took a long time to smash them up – or rather hit out the bottoms. One of the club's two bats saw it's last days as it was cracked in half after too many swings at one of the stubborn barrels. But finally all the candy fell out and the kids got to collect their treasures and a "kattekonge" and "kattedroning" were crowned. Since the barrels are hardly damaged, we think we might be able to use them again next year?

The party was planned by Flemming Mengel, Charlotte Rhodes, Karoline Mortensen and Linda Martin. Thank you!

Pictures at: <http://www.dkhouston.org/pictures/fastelavn06/>



# Vikingskolen - A Danish School for Houston-Area Children

## Introduction

In the spring of 2006, we formed a small committee that issued a survey to the Houston-area Danes to uncover the interest and format for establishing a Saturday school for children in Houston. We thank everyone for taking the time to respond and the encouraging words.

We received more than 50 replies from families across Houston representing different needs. These came from Danish/Danish couples, Danish/American or third nationality couples who live in Houston on a permanent or temporary basis. There were also a group of second generation Danish Americans and some who have no children but who would like to be involved.

While many were not sure of their long term plans for relocation, the vast majority of families had in common the desire to keep alive some level of Danish language skills, culture and traditions for their children. We have incorporated this great feedback into the mission and format for the school in the hopes to suit most of the needs. You can read more about the survey feedback following the below.

## Mission and Format of the School

The school has been named – Vikingskolen – to signify our Scandinavian heritage and because we feel there are many fun and interactive themes we can play with in the school curriculum from the Viking age – Everything from making Viking ships and bright shields to studying runes and Norse mythology.

***Our mission is to promote the Danish language, culture and traditions for all children who wish to learn Danish regardless of proficiency.***

### Our Core Values

- 1) ***Having fun while learning Danish***

- 2) ***Danish is the attempted language spoken during school***
- 3) ***Parental involvement is key to success***

The school will be held on Saturday mornings with a tentative fall semester starting September 9. The physical locations have not yet been finalized since the survey results pointed to the church in Rice Village which was not available on Saturday mornings (the preferred time of the survey respondents).

We have outlined our envisioned programs and schedule below which are very much just in the planning stages and pending availability of teachers. Initially, we may only provide 1-2 programs, and expand for the following semester:

Age	Teacher/Aids/Parent Involvement:
0-24ms	Ideally led by a parent team leader who is responsible for executing a pre-planned program; parents must be present
2-4yrs	Ideally led by a trained boernehavepaedagog or similar; 1-2 parent teacher aids always presents; other parents welcome to stay
5-8yrs	Ideally led by a trained folkeskolelaere, fritidshjemslaerer, paedagog or similar; 1-2 parent teacher aids always present; other parents welcome to stay
9yrs+	Ideally led by a trained folkeskolelaere, fritidshjemslaerer, paedagog or similar; 1-2 parents teacher aids always present; other parents welcome to stay

The Saturday morning schedule will look as follows with the Fall semester tentatively commencing September 9 through December 16:

08:30-09:00 Breakfast (Optional/parents stay)  
09:00-10:00 Program part I

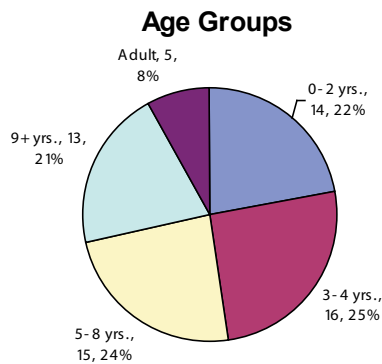


10:15-10:30 Snack  
 10:30-11:30 Program part II  
 11:30-11:45 Play time

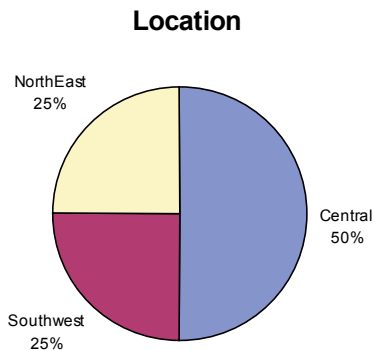
We have not yet finalized the curriculum, cost and further details but will communicate this later.

## Survey results at a glance

Of the 51 replies, there were approx. 60 children in different age groups (see chart). Of the 0-4, the majority were Beginners to Intermediate. Of the 5-8 half were Advanced and the other half Beginners. From 7-8 and up there were 60% Advanced and only 40% Beginner/Intermediate. Also 50% of those surveyed have 1-2 siblings in other age groups.



Of those surveyed, 50 percent favored the central location at Rice Village. The remaining responses were split between the Southwest and Northwest location, however the Southwest location had a higher number of children associated with it. Before making our final decision, we are still looking at alternative locations.



Eighty-four percent favored the Saturday morning timeslot 9-12 a.m. Thirty-nine percent wished to spend up to \$200 per semester, while 28% would spend up to \$300. A smaller number wished to pay less.

### Curriculum:

We had some great ideas and thoughts on curriculum. Here are some abstracts that we will take to heart (edited for length):

***“That classes would be structured and planned, not just a forum for Danish kids to play.”***

*“Similar to what they have in Denmark.”*

*“Reading Danish stories, circle time with identifying letters in the **Danish alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes**, traditional Danish Lunch “i det fri”, center time with art, dramatic play, manipulatives (labeled in Danish or with Danish connotations), excursions with Danish themes.”*

*“Basic vocabulary and grammar, with a focus on reading and speaking, possibly later writing.”*

*“Age appropriate reading and writing.”*

***“...sounding out the alphabet and learning to speak and understand Danish.”***

*“Use of published language training book and educated Danish teacher.”*

*“Danish traditions and customs (celebrations throughout the year) – Danish games (particularly ones that require group setting. I.e. “to mand frem for en enke loeb”) – **Danish songs, singing games (bro bro brille), fingerplays, rhymes** etc. Current events in Denmark – Library with materials for beginning readers and other Danish books particularly the thicker ones that you dread carrying in your suitcase (Lille hus paa praerien.) **Not particularly interested in Danish instruction.**”*

*“Single most important factor would be **Danish culture, heritage and history**. For the bigger kids, Denmark’s interactions with EU and relationship with the rest of Scandinavia (historic relations with Nordisk Raad up to today’s situation, and **why we have so much in common with our fellow Scandinavians** opposed to continental Europe). Denmark’s political map (the word “liberal” meaning two different things). Understanding the Danish educational system. For example the term “university” has quite a different value for those considering education in Denmark later on... Core*



*difference between Danish/American educational philosophies.”*

***“Age-based and taking into account Danish proficiency.”***

*“The differences between US and Danish culture and history.”*

***“Geography, literature, music, movies and rhymes and cultural education.”***

*“Be able to converse in Danish.”*

*“None, just give the kids and opportunity to speak and learn some Danish.”*

***“The most important thing for me is for my child to hear and speak as much Danish as possible through songs, games, stories and FUN.”***

Thanks for all the great feedback to help us shape a curriculum.

#### **Volunteering:**

Thirteen people offered themselves as teachers/ teacher aids. Ten for enrollment and admin. Nine for scheduling. Twenty five for special events and excursions. Sixteen for Danish books, music and dvds, seven for Danish educational material. Nineteen for snacks. Six for financial donations. Thanks to everyone committing their resources, Vikingskolen can only become a reality with your support and thank you for so obviously understanding that. We will be in touch.

#### **Challenges:**

With very few exceptions, the idea of attending a Danish language school once a week was very positively received. Some even felt the scope could be broadened to include reading and writing skills on a more frequent schedule for older children planning to return to Danish schools. We, the committee, feel that this is a great idea that we would like to start working on shortly after the start-up phase of the school. We believe our biggest challenge will be to find qualified teachers or people with teaching experience. We will likely need to rely heavily on parent involvement as teacher aids which we will need to schedule in advance of and for the whole semester. The idea of a summer camp was also well received and we will be working on making that a reality come summer 2007, contingent on continued interest.

Therefore, for the school to be successful, our call of ACTION TO YOU is to contact us if you would like or know someone who would like to be a teacher or volunteer parent teacher aid.

For more information or ideas, contact Christina Brinch Clark, 832-660-6496, [Christina@web-convergence.com](mailto:Christina@web-convergence.com). Or visit [www.dkhouston.org](http://www.dkhouston.org), News section for some more background on this project.

Once again Thank You so much for all your support!



From left: Carl Steffensen, Lillian S. Jensen, Hannes Hofer, Mette Miller, Christina B. Clark and Linda M. Martin

## New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Danish Club of Houston. We are looking forward to meeting you at events.

Julianna & Richard McKitrick  
Henning Hansen  
Karin & Richard Doidge  
Carsten & Jane Ledel  
Henrik Larsen  
Jørgen Jørgensen  
Bjarne & Heather Rasmussen

## Young Danes Network

The Young Danish Network (YDN) usually meet on the third Friday of each month for Happy Hour at a centrally located water hole. You do not need to be young to show up, just don't try to keep up with the young crowd!

If you are not on the mailing list, contact ring leader Nadine Grau at [youngdanes@dkhouston.org](mailto:youngdanes@dkhouston.org). YDN operates as a separate group under the Danish Club with own mailing list and own activities.

## Facts About The Danish Club

### Board of Directors:

Lillian S. Jensen, President	713-784-5721
Carl Steffensen, Vice President	281-493-4801
Hannes Hofer, Treasurer	713-664-7784
Mette Miller, Secretary	281-859-3140
Christina B. Clark, Activity Coordinator	713-862-0739
Linda M. Martin, Activity Coordinator	713-529-0302

### [www.dkhouston.org](http://www.dkhouston.org)

Have you read our web site lately? We have plenty of interesting links, and you can view the Club's impressive Photo Archive. Updated member address list is also available for members private use. The address list may not be used as a commercial mailing list. E-mail Hannes or ask a friend if you do not know the password.

Hannes is always thankful for ideas or suggestions for further improvements of the site.

### Address & E-mail Changes:

Hannes Hofer  
4042 Silverwood, Houston, Texas 77025  
e-mail: [info@dkhouston.org](mailto:info@dkhouston.org)

### T-shirts and Hats:

The Club is still selling T-shirts and hats with our logo. We have just put in an order and will be having T-shirts for kids available shortly. Please, contact Mette Miller if interested ([stuff@dkhouston.org](mailto:stuff@dkhouston.org)).

### Newsletter:

This volume is edited by Lillian S. Jensen, and mailed to members in good standing and selected friends of the Danish-American community in Houston. Next issue: September 2006