

## **Busy Season... Low Turn-out**

Dear Member Families...

It is Easter, and we can look back at a couple of busy months in the Danish-American community in Houston. Not only the Danish Club, but also the Danish Consulate and the Heritage Society in Danevang have been very active, and we are very thankful for the great cooperation with "The Royals" and the "Danevangs".

What is not that great is the poor attendance! Fastelavn was OK with approx. 60 adults and kids, but the following week only a handful showed up for the Fotofest reception. – It was a Monday night, and the gallery was tough to find on a dirt road next to the railway tracks, - but still..

The Reception at the Holocaust Museum drew only some 10-15 members, and we were greatly disappointed and a little embarrassed, that only 15 people showed up for the interesting Sunday tour at Rice University, followed by the Danish Vesper in a nearby Church with rev. Kirsten Drigsdahl.

Finally, approx. 20 adults and kids made the long drive to Danevang to celebrate the Groundbreaking of the new Heritage Center.

With our Membership renewal form we asked members for comments and good ideas for new activities. We got some nice thumbs-up from our members, but not one single suggestion.

Maybe it does reflect, that most members are satisfied with attending Christmas Party, Grundlovsfest w. Annual Meeting and/or Fastelavn and being kept up to date with our frequent Newsflashes and our Newsletters?

We have two more events coming, before closing down for the summer: A visit to St. Arnold's Micro brewery and the Annual Meeting. We encourage you to come to the Annual Meeting and Grundlovsdags-celebration on June 4, we need to get some input. Don't worry, you can come up with good ideas without being elected to the Board..

For the fall season we have so far scheduled a picnic tour to Brenham, a bike or hike at Brazos Bend, a visit to a drilling rig in Galveston and maybe some Deep-sea Fishing. Also the Danish Golf Invitational is pending. The Christmas Party will be held at very nice and more roomy facilities at Rice University, more details to follow after the Summer break.

We still hope to reach the goal of 100 member families before this Newsletter goes to print. Some 100 members – which with the current mix of families and single members may correspond to some 250 people is great, but we are concerned that no more than 10-20 % show up frequently for our events.

So, give us some good ideas – and maybe you want to arrange an event? E-mail us at [nhk@flsmiljo.com](mailto:nhk@flsmiljo.com) or call one of the Board Members, your support and ideas are always appreciated.

Niels Kastrup

## **Fastelavn's Party**

The Danes in Houston celebrated "Fastelavn" on the last Sunday of February, where 60 kids and parents met at Bear Creek Park for a traditional Danish Fastelavns Party. Carl had prepared and decorated the two wooden barrels, and the small kids had some serious problems beating their way to the candy, while the bigger kids whacked their barrel without too much trouble.

We had prizes for the best kid's costumes, and Cat Kings and Queens were properly celebrated. Susie Larsen and Lisbeth Mogensen had been busy baking "fastelavnsboller", and everybody enjoyed coffee and all the good stuff in the wonderful sunny weather.



*The kids had a good time in Bear Creek Park and fought long and hard with the wooden barrels – but everybody got their share of the candy.. No cats were hurt, no kids either..*

## **Danish Constitution Day Party & Annual Meeting**

Welcome to the 4th Danish Constitution Day Picnic and the 3rd Regular Annual Meeting on

**Sunday, June 4 at 2 pm.  
Nottingham Forest Club, Kickerillo Drive**

Bring your Picnic Basket, Admission is free for members in good standing, and this year's sponsor of a keg of cold beer is FLS miljø Inc. Please bring your own soft drinks and wine.

We hope that you will all show up and celebrate the day with Danish-American friends. Key note speaker is Major Michael Rosenkrands from the Royal Danish Air Force, who will talk about the education of Danish fighter pilots at Sheppard AFB in North Texas.

Program:

2 pm.	Picnic
4.15 pm.	Key note Speech
4.30 pm.	Annual Meeting
8 pm.	Party ends

### **Call for Annual Meeting**

Regular Annual Meeting will in accordance with the By-Laws include the following Agenda:

1. Election of Chair of Meeting
2. President's Report for the Year
3. Treasurer's Financial Report for the Year
4. Approvals, and Decharge of Board of Directors.
5. Elections:
  - a) President
  - b) Vice-President
  - c) Treasurer
  - d) Secretary
  - e) Committee Coordinators
  - f) Two Substitutes
  - g) Two Auditors
6. New Activities
7. Sundry

### **Suggestions From the Board of Directors:**

The following change to the By-Laws is suggested by the Board:

ARTICLE V, FINANCIAL AFFAIRS  
Section 1. FISCAL YEAR - The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of ~~January~~ *April* and end on the last day of ~~December~~ *March* of each year. *The Fiscal Year 2000 shall be extended until March 31, 2001.*

Motivation:

With the Annual Meeting taking place early June and membership renewal drive during January-March, the suggested fiscal year better reflects the work of the Board and the Club, and the Financial Report provides more relevant and up-to-date information to the Annual Meeting and the new Board.

### **Board Roster:**

Johnny Larsen has decided to "take a break" from the Board because of heavy workload. Johnny will remain involved with all our activities, - our sincere thanks to Johnny for keeping the books in good order since the start of the Danish Club.

Hannes Hofer has accepted to become "official" member of the Board, and we suggest therefore the following slate for Election:

President:	Niels Kastrup
Vice President:	Carl Steffensen
Treasurer:	Hannes Hofer
Secretary:	Mette Miller
Activity Coord.:	Lisbeth Mogensen
Activity Coord.:	Lis Ostergaard

Substitutes:	Suggestions Appreciated
Auditors:	Michael Miller
	Open

### **How to find Nottingham Forest Club..**

Kickerillo is off Memorial Drive, close to Dairy-Ashford. The Club is located at the "bottom" of the Nottingham Forest Subdivision. (Key map 488/489) Look for the Danish flags, if you can not find it.. Tables and park benches are available, but stick your folding chairs in the trunk, just in case that everybody shows up.

## **FOTOFEST 2000**

Several Danish artists were presented in an exhibit entitled "Highlights in Nordic Photogravure" at the Winter Street Art Gallery. Only one Danish artist showed up in Houston, together with the Danish curator from Odense, who had coordinated the Scandinavian Exhibition.

Hannes Hofer helped the Consulate taking care of the Scandinavian guests in Houston, and got even more involved than he really wanted to. A Finnish artist apparently lost his brain when leaving Houston. At George Bush Intercontinental, he jokingly told security that a co-traveler had a bomb...

Few hours later Hannes got a call from the county prison.. – and Hannes ended up posting bond for the Finnish artist out of his own pocket and spending four full days arranging for lawyers etc., until a Grand Jury was kind enough to clear the somber Finn.

Thru the Danish Consulate, the Danish Ambassador Mr. K.E. Tygessen got wind of Hannes' efforts and wrote a very nice letter to Hannes, from which we quote: *You are, indeed, a truly fine example of a human being coming to the rescue of another human being in distress. We are fortunate to have Danes like you living in the American community, and your ancestors would have good reason to be proud of you.*

Also the Danish Club have good reason to be proud of our "hidden" Board member and web-master, who is always there to give a hand.

The exhibition? .. Well, if you are not a dedicated "Photogravure" fan, it was kinda so and so.. And the food was either gone or cold when I finally found my way to the Winter Street Gallery.

*nhk*

## **Focus on Denmark at Holocaust Museum**

The Danish Consulate supported by Danish companies and individuals in Houston was sponsoring a reception in connection with a symposium entitled: "The Instinct to Righteousness" at the Houston Holocaust Museum.

The symposium dealt with the rescue of Denmark's Jewish population to Sweden during the Second World War. The Museum featured an exhibition in connection with the symposium and the reception, showcasing the October 1943 rescue.

Ray Daugbjerg and Anna Thomsen represented the Consulate at the reception, and some 10-15 members of the Danish Club were in attendance. Speeches were given by representatives from The Museum and the Jung Institute, and also Ray Daugbjerg addressed the audience.

The Danish Club, represented by Niels Kastrup and Carl Steffensen, presented a commemorative poster, marking the 50 years Anniversary of the October 1943 rescue. The poster was issued by the Danish Council in the Greater New York area in connection with Grundlovsdag's celebrations in June 1993. We have later received a very nice letter from the Holocaust Museum, thanking the Danish Club for the present.

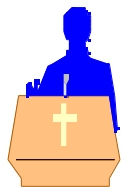


*The commemorative poster was presented to Mr. Roy Nickel, Chairman of the Holocaust Museum, by Carl Steffensen and Niels Kastrup.*

## **5-a-Side + Barbeque = Rain-Out**

Omigosh – What a flush... With the Weather on Sunday, April 2, one would question our Norwegian friends' connection to the higher powers above..

The weather had been bad all morning, but there were signs of clearing, so a few of the Danes set



course for Pasadena and the Norwegian Family Service, followed by Barbeque, Five-a-side soccer and kid's games. The Service was held indoors, and the church was completely full.

The afternoon was a total rain-out, but the five-a-side soccer went on, and later the weather cleared enough to allow for some swimming for the kids.

We were represented by only one soccer team, put together by FLS miljø, and half of the players never made it thru the rain and thunder. Even the coach had to play all the games to have a full team, - luckily enough all the water and mud slowed down the games.

Needless to say, we got beaten by both the Norwegians and the Swedes, but not too bad. Winner was a Norwegian Student team from College Station.

### ***Visit to Rice University***

A small crowd of 15 adults and kids showed up for the interesting tour of Rice University. Both Al Jensen and Hannes Hofer co-hosted the tour, which was given by a faculty representative.

Following a video presentation, we walked through some of the colleges and the academic facilities. Rice has a number of spectacular buildings and facilities, and the only four thousand students and five hundred faculty members are really pampered.

Thanks to Rice University and to Hannes for arranging the tour, thanks also to Al Jensen for participating. We are sorry, that only a few members took the chance to see the beautiful campus, but all members will get a chance to return to Rice in December for the Danish Christmas Party.

### ***Danish Vesper in Houston..***

Christ The King Lutheran Church and rev. Kirsten Drigsdahl from Alleroed, Denmark had invited the Danish Club to a Sunday night vesper in the Church, followed by a reception featuring Danish food. The service included organ music by Buxtehude and Carl Nielsen, Danish hymns sung in Danish and English, as well as bible readings.

Thanks to the Church and to Kirsten Drigsdahl and to Bridget Jensen for inviting us all to the Vesper in the beautiful Christ The King Church, located just down the road from Rice.

### ***Information from the Royal Danish Consulate***

Information regarding the court case following the death of Lise Lesec:

To close the loop and update all the generous people of the Danish Club, who sent their condolence and helped out with money for Lise's children, I can inform all of you that the case against Lise's husband Jean Lesec was heard in the 232nd court here in Houston in early April.

The trial itself lasted 3 days, and the jury (9 women and 3 men) found Jean guilty as charged: Murder of the first degree. The deliberations took all of 5 minutes. Lise's mother Birgitte Kuscher, and the two boys Jacques age 14 and Nicolas age 12, flew in from California to testify in the case. It was heartbreaking to hear everything all over again, and it was quite hard for the boys, but at least now they can start healing.

The sentencing phase of the trial concluded on April 10, and Jean was sentenced to 99 years in jail - this means that he will have to serve a minimum of 30 years before any parole will be possible. We feel that justice has been served. He could have gotten as little as 5 years and maximum would have been life

He most likely will seek to appeal the above, but the prosecutor assured us that chances for appeal were slim to non-existent. I shall keep you updated if anything further develops.

Anna D.S. Thomsen, Vice Consul

*Editors note: Lise and Anna were close personal friends for many years, and Anna has therefore followed the tragedy on very close hand. Anna is maintaining close contact with the boys and their grandmother in California.*

### ***Our Condolences to Cherry & Ray Daugbjerg***

The members of the Danish Club of Houston wish to express our condolences and respect at the loss of Cherry's mother, Ms. Lois Bender Windrum on April 15. Born in 1913, Ms. Windrum lived a rich and interesting life, including fifteen years in the South Pacific, where her husband was a British diplomat. After returning to Houston, Ms. Windrum resumed a teaching career, and she lived her later years quietly in Brenham.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to honor Lois Windrum's memory may make a contribution to The Brookwood Community, 1752 FM 1489, Brookshire, TX 77423.

### ***Ground Breaking in Danevang***

The editor was under the weather, but our reporter and club representative Carl Steffensen reports from the festivities in Danevang on April 15:

The official groundbreaking was very nice. Homer Smith from the Heritage Society initiated the ceremony with a brief welcome, Lawrence Petersen recognized special guests and introduced the Heritage Society Board, a special song (also used at the groundbreaking of the Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn) was sung to accordion accompaniment of Carl Schaer.

Remarks were made by Anna Thomsen, Vice Consul, Merle Hudgins of the Wharton Co. Historical Society, Wharton Co. Judge Lawrence Naiser, Carl Steffensen for The Danish Club of Houston, and Irvin Wind, Building and Grounds Chairman for the DHPD. The ceremony closed with a prayer by Rev. Laird Engle, pastor of the Danevang Lutheran Church.

The kids were on a hayride through the community and returned in time for the closing prayer. We then all moved to the Forsamlingshus for lunch - bbq chicken, roedkaal, potatoes, sild, cheese... even a few Carlsbergs!

Homer Smith made a tribute to the Queen, consul Ray Daugbjerg added a few more comments and read the letter about Hannes Hofer's generosity from the ambassador, and then Anna Thomsen led a toast to the Queen. Your reporter led the

crowd in singing "Kong Christian stod ved hoejen mast" (Niels - you didn't tell me I had to sing...).

Bridgit Jensen got the crowd going on 5 more songs, and then the folk dancers performed with a mixture of polkas and waltzes, and included the attendees in several to the enjoyment of everyone. The afternoon was finished with aebleskiver and coffee. A very enjoyable and rewarding day.

*Carl S.*

The Danish Club's gift to the Heritage Society in Danevang is a Guest Register with a small commemorative plaque, to be used for the new Museum.



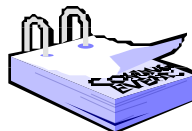
### ***Visit to St. Arnolds Brewery***

Join us for a free tour of the Saint Arnold Brewing Company Saturday, May 13 at 1 pm. The tour is approx. 45 minutes, and is followed by beer tasting. No sign up is required, just show up and look for some familiar faces – and we will bring a Danish flag.

Saint Arnolds is located on 2522 Fairway Park Drive, from the 610 loop, take 290 to Antoine / 34<sup>th</sup> Str. Take a U-turn and turn right on Mitcheldale. Second left is Fairway Park Drive. For more details, check [www.saintarnold.com](http://www.saintarnold.com).

Look forward to see you for a taste of the high quality micro brewski presented by Saint Arnold.

### ***Season Calendar 1999-2000***



**Saturday, May 13, 1 pm**

Visit to St. Arnolds Micro Brewery



**Sunday, June 4, 2 pm.**

Danish Constitution Day Party & Annual Meeting.

**June, TBA**

European Soccer Cup, Beer & Ball

**Fall Season 2000:**

Bike & Hike, Brazos Bend

Danish Invit. Golf Tournament

Barbeque in Brenham

Deep Sea Fishing

Christmas Party at Rice University.

-And some other good ideas...

### **Gulf Coast Scandinavian Folkdancers**

Would you like to do some Scandinavian two-stepping ? Carl and Fran Steffensen have joined the Scandinavian Folkdancers and would like to introduce some Danes to the team.

You do not need any prior dancing skills, just show up at Westbury United Methodist Church on Mondays from 7.15 to 9 pm. The church is located on 5200 Willow Bend Blvd., near South Post Oak and Belfort.

For more information, contact instructor Howard Phillips at 713-661-5619 (hphillips@pdq.net) or Carl Steffensen at 281-584-3691 (steff@flash.net)

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

Wanna read or print this Newsletter in flying colors ? Don't forget to visit our web site to check on the latest news from the Danish Club or to review our photo archive from previous events.

### **Happy Five-O to Susie Ipsen**

Rumors have it, that Susie is celebrating her Birthday on May 3, while on vacation in Denmark. Congratulations from the Danish Club !!

### **Facts About The Danish Club...**

#### **Board of Directors:**

Niels H. Kastrup, President (acting)	281-855-9299
Johnny Larsen, Treasurer	281-316-1972
Mette Miller, Secretary	281-859-3140
Lisbeth Mogensen, Activ. Coord.	281-992-1136
Carl Steffensen ,Activ. Coord.	281-493-4801
Lis Ostergaard,	281-333-0295

#### **Mailing Address / Address Changes or e-mail changes:**

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#### **Newsletter:**

This volume is edited by Niels H. Kastrup, and mailed to members and selected friends of the Danish-American community in Houston.

*Advertisement*

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