

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ◆ Dec. 2
2 PM—4 PM
Santa Lucia
Celebration at
the Museum
- Jan. 20
10 AM
Meeting of the
Board of Direc-
tors
- ◆ Feb. 10
10 AM
Annual General
Membership
Meeting at the
Museum -
lunch and visit-
ing to follow
Meeting

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The Voice:



Sharing the story of historic Danevang— past, present, and future.

SUMMER - FALL 2017

Hurricanes - Why Harvey?

Few of us know why or who decides the name of a hurricane. As you may know, there was a terrible storm in 1945 that almost destroyed Danevang but it was not given a name. It is simply known as "the 1945 storm." The storm hit in late August of that year and took a track across Danevang, destroying the church and many homes in the community. August 1945 recorded just over 25 inches of rain. August of 2017 recorded 16.05 inches with only 13.71 during Hurricane Harvey. Fortunately, the storm of 2017, Harvey, did little damage to structures but certainly didn't help our crops.

Farmers had worked tirelessly to harvest cotton before the storm hit, but unfortunately about half remained in the fields.

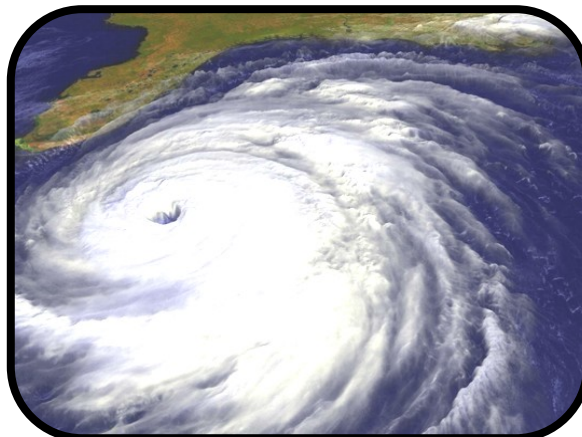
Many of us remember Hurricane Carla in 1961 which wrecked havoc on our portion of the Gulf Coast. Again, it was the same time of year which seems to be a pattern for our major storms to come across our land.

The naming of storms began in the early 1900s by a meteorologist in Queensland, Australia but then disappeared for general use until the end of World War II. At that time, storms in the Pacific were given names. Since 1945,

the U.S. National Hurricane Center (NHC) has named storms in the North Atlantic and Eastern Pacific. Other members of the World Meteorological Organization have the responsibility for naming storms in other oceanic regions. Any member can ask that a name not be used or removed based on the severity of the storm or other reasons.

According to Wikipedia, "Names are generally assigned in order from pre-determined lists, once they produce one, three, or ten-minute sustained wind speeds of more than 65 km/h (40 mph)."

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This and That



The Danish Heritage Museum

Lunch and Coffee

Tours – We are seeking tours for November and for spring. If you have a group of 20-40 people

who would enjoy a lunch and tour, please call. These tours are a major contributor to our bottom line so we intend to carry on as long as we can. Each cookie tour takes about 3 hours and a lunch tour takes about 4 hours. Call Suzan if you can help.

Membership Dues – You will receive one more newsletter before your annual membership dues are due on January 1. Membership packets will be in the mail by November 10. As part of the packet you are

Helping the Handicapped -

As previously mentioned, Federal law requires that we have a handicapped accessible door and ramp. We were able to add a ramp but then our door assist broke. Many of our guests are in need of assistance when they come to our door so we would like to have the new equipment installed but haven't had luck finding someone to tackle the job. If you have the capability of installing the door opener or know someone we can call, please let Suzan know.

asked how you want to receive the newsletter. We encourage you to consider receiving the newsletter by email which means you see it in color. Dues are \$20 per person.

Fun Run Apology - Our apologies to Rachel Ramirez, the women's overall winner of the 2016 Fun Run. We mistakenly included a picture of her sister, Rebecca, in the article and listed her as the winner. Rachel had trained hard to accomplish this goal and is proud of the accomplishment. She wants this "not to happen again so that those who train diligently will be recognized for reaching their goal." We sincerely apologize. We look forward to seeing the sisters race again on April 14, 2017.

"We encourage you to consider receiving the newsletter by email..."

Interested in Serving?

Qualifications: Member of the Danish Heritage Preservation Society, a friendly smile, a genuine interest in Danevang's heritage and a willingness to serve

Hours: Four meetings a year and a few additional days as your schedule allows to help as a docent and/or with lunch tours

Compensation: The heartfelt thanks of our members and especially the Board.

What is this spectacular job? Why a member of the Board of Directors of the Danish Heritage Preservation Society of course. Each year in February, at the annual general membership meeting, Board members are elected. There may be vacancies this year for two and three year terms. The job really is fun and generally requires only that you be willing to make decisions, attend three or four Board meetings a

year and offer to act as docent or help with a special event at least once every six months. Of course, if you are available more often, we will welcome you.

Many thanks to all who have served and are serving now. Their enthusiasm, vision and attention to the needs of the Society continue to move us forward. Contact Ralph Petersen at repc@wcec-wb.net for more information.

Hurricanes Continued



Separation between concrete board and cinder blocks on the outside east wall of the Museum.

In the North Atlantic, the NHC uses six lists to name storms. These lists rotate every six years and begin with the first letters A-W but skipping Q and U. The names now alternate between male and female names. If all of the names on a list have been used, the names then take on the letters of the Greek alphabet. Before 1979, only female names were used but were expanded to alternate between the sexes and include a few Spanish and French names. The names remaining on the 2017 list include: Ophelia, Philippe, Rina, Sean, Tammy, Vince and Whitney.

There was minimal damage to our Museum, but it did bring attention to a few places that either did leak or have the potential to leak. Water seeped into our vault through small spaces around the air conditioning unit/dehumidifier. Those problems have been repaired and mildew/mold abatement has been completed in the vault. However, we discovered another area that allowed water entry into the vault via the exterior storeroom and water also leaked into the exterior store room. This most likely occurred because of the excessively strong winds and huge amount of

rain. We are seeking bids for repairs and upgrades of the vault and storeroom to allow better security and safety of our artifacts.

The 1945 storm almost destroyed us but the early Danes were determined to rebuild. We too will stay. We were fortunate to weather Harvey without much damage and pray that many more years go by before we see another name from the list.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all storm victims.



Vault after Harvey



St. Lucia wears a crown of candles.

St. Lucia Celebration

Get an early start on the Christmas holidays by attending and participating in the joyous celebration of St. Lucia Day on December 2 at the Museum. The festivities will include the story of St. Lucia, patron saint of light, a procession of

children, dancing around the Christmas tree, refreshments, singing, crafts and a visit from Santa.

Our Santa Lucia this year is Anna Kight, daughter of Jennifer & Dale Kight of Danevang. The fun begins at 2 P.M.

and will last until 4 P.M. No reservations are required.

If you would like more information about our St. Lucia Celebration, please contact Patty Jensen at 543-3009.

Words from the Past: Marius Thyssen



Marius and Carol
Thyssen

Marius Thyssen left a document that relates the story of his travels to Danevang as a young man seeking a better life and the initial years he spent here. We hope you enjoy going back in time with him.

"I was born on April 8th, 1884 in Stenderup South Jutland, Denmark. My father was Simon Andersen Thyssen and my mother was Magdalene Jesson Thyssen. I had six brothers and two sisters; Anders, Jes, Michael, Peter, Emil, Carol, Kjestine and Marie. My father died when I was seven years of age and my mother died when I was fourteen.

A recollection which I have of my father was that he did not wear his wedding ring except for dress and he kept it up above the door. I remember him giving me a whipping on one occasion for leaving the cattle in the stable all day. I remember the day I started school I cried to beat

the band and did not like it a bit. We went to German school and there was a constant battle between the Germans and the Danes.

After mother died, my eldest brother, Anders and his wife were designated to keep the home together. Mother had stipulated in her will that we were all to remain at home under his guardianship until the age of 19 when we would get our inheritance. This did not work out so well as Anders took advantage of his authority and it caused a lot of ill feeling. After I left home at the age of 19, I worked on a large place near home for two years. I received \$75.00 a year, plus room and board for my services.

The part of Denmark in which I was born and lived belonged to Germany at the beginning of World War I, which meant I would have to serve as a German soldier. My brother Peter

had already gone to get out of serving as a German soldier and so I decided to get away before they took me into the Army. I left my home at the age of 21 early in the morning because I was afraid the police might catch me before I got over the Danish border. This was in May of 1905. But nothing happened and after my brother took me over the border, I boarded a train for Copenhagen. I had arranged for a steamer ticket from Copenhagen to New York before that time. My ticket was 208 Krone, which at that time was \$52.00 (\$33 in 2017) all the way from Copenhagen to El Campo, Texas.

After arriving in Copenhagen it was necessary for me to stay over there for a couple of days before departure. I remember while passing at the hotel I met up with a couple of young men who became very friendly with me.

Continued on pg. 6

Donations July 15 - October 1

Donations to the General Fund

Carol Christiansen Cannell Air—David Cannell (In-Kind Repair)
 Bridget Jensen William Valigura
 Sandra Petersen

In Remembrance

Jim & Carole Harton In memory of Gary Harton
 Elvin & Suzan Berndt In memory of Gary Harton
 Ralph Petersen In memory of Lawrence, Verner and Louise Petersen
 Dorothy Waldman In memory of Myrtle and Annette Waldman

In Honor Of

Patty Jensen In honor of Diana Melanson

Danish Researcher Visits

Early in August, Tina L. Larsen, a doctoral fellow from Aarhus University in Denmark contacted Pam Pope to see if it would be possible to visit Danevang and interview some of our members, see the Museum's records, which include the history of Danevang and the Danish Folk Society, and may as well as the impact of the philosophy of N.F.S. Grundtvig on the church and community.

Church and Life magazine

explained that early immigrants put "their stamp on their Grundtvigian beliefs in the congregation...." In Danevang their emphasis on integrating "social, physical, political, artistic and intellectual aspects of life" were and are evident in the day to day life of our community.

Ms. Larsen's working title is *Religion on the Move: A case study of integration, mobility and settledness among Danish Grundtvigians in America*

1887-1964

She has interviewed many of our members including: Irvin and Elaine Wind, Darlene Miksik, Sharon Mayhall, Pam Pope, Ralph Petersen, Patty Jensen and Sherry Green. She also spent time searching through various documents with Suzan Berndt, our museum director, and she visited with the Board at their meeting on October 14.

We look forward to reading the finished product of this research.

Words from the Past Continued

“...and there I happened to meet up with a man from Danevang by the name of Chris Madsen.”

They suggested that we go down to the docks to see the boat I was to take. They had told me that they were also going on the same boat to Africa. We did and after seeing the boat, they suggested that we have a drink at a bar. My brother had warned me about being friendly with strangers so I was on my toes. It seemed odd to me we went back to a back room for our drink and I didn't like it one bit. Then one of them suggested that he had never seen a steamer ticket to America and could he see mine. I immediately knew I was in trouble, so got up immediately, went and paid for my drink and went back to the hotel. Nor did I ever see them again.

The trip to New York took about 12 days. When we arrived in New York there was a Norwegian minister who took care of a lot of immigrants who landed there. He took me to a hotel

where I stayed overnight. In the morning we boarded another steamer for New Orleans. I remember on the steamer I took fever. I could not talk English and no one could talk Danish, but there was some people on board who could see that I was sick. They offered me a drink of whiskey, which made me feel a whole lot better pretty quick. So I was OK for the rest of the trip. It took two or three days to New Orleans. It was not a very big steamer and we were all together in one room and the food was not very good either.

From New Orleans I took the train for Houston and landed there at 12:00 at night. Before I left home my brother Peter had sent me a card with the name of a hotel in Houston where they could talk German so at the railroad station I got a cab and showed him this card and he took me right to the hotel. There they could understand me as I talked German well enough. I had a room

there for the night and in the morning I walked to the station and got on the right train for El Campo.

There was nobody at the station to meet me in El Campo because Peter did not know exactly what day I would be there. From the station I walked downtown and into a store that was run by a Swede and there I happened to meet up with a man from Danevang by the name of Chris Madsen. The owner of this store was Isaacson and I told him where I wanted to go so he directed me the way to take. I had two big suit cases and they were heavy. I left one at the store and with the other one in my hand I started walking East from El Campo to the Johnson farm. This was about the 5th of June and it was hot. Before I got all the way an old man with a horse and buggy stopped and started to talk to me. He happened to be German....

Continued next edition

Obituaries

Gary Wayne Harton - was born on October 28, 1956 in El Campo, TX to Kermit and Esther Staff Harton. He passed on June 29, 2017 surrounded by his family at M.C. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. He graduated from El Campo High School where he played defensive tackle with the fighting Rice-birds' Class of 1975. He was selected as All District three times and went on to play ball at Wharton County Junior College and Middle Tennessee State University where he pursued a degree in Agriculture Business. He grew up bailing hay and ranching cattle with his family until they began farming corn, cotton, and milo. He began a career in agriculture machinery sales with Schult Implement Company in El Campo and eventually opened his own Case IH dealership in Edna—Jackson County Equipment Company. He was also a respected farm equipment appraiser. He loved the land and farming.

He met the love of his life at the Wharton County Fair. He married Sharon Ottis on

January 16, 1988. They raised three children whom he coached in softball, baseball, football and also assisted with scouts. He coached third base for the select baseball team, The El Campo Dragons. He was actively involved with Troop 226 Boy Scouts and was proud to see his son become an Eagle Scout.

His favorite pastimes included mowing, riding the four-wheeler, teaching his kids to swim, gardening, picking dewberries and watching the wildlife on his 12 acres. He also loved fishing, following various sports teams including the Blue Raiders, Houston Astros and Texans. He especially enjoyed the El Campo Rice-birds. He was a devoted father who supported his kids in all their activities.

He was a member of St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in El Campo and served as a member of the Parish Council.

Preceding him in death were his infant son Christopher Matthias, infant sister Sharon Marie, grandparents Bill and Esther Harton, and

Emil and Frances Staff, and parents-in-law Matt and Clarice Ottis. Surviving him are children Erica, Ashley and Jacob, brothers Kermit (Theresa) Harton and Glenn (Cheri) Harton, sisters Pam (Jim) Fleming and Sherry (David) Long, sisters and brothers-in-law, Yvonne (Sam) Evans, Mary Ottis and Melinda (Thad) Bujnoch, his faithful companion Addisen, many nieces and nephews as well as countless friends.

The family received friends and relatives on July 1 at St Philip the Apostle Catholic Church, from 9 until the rosary at 10:30. Funeral Mass followed at 11 with Father Michael Rother officiating. Interment was at Holy Cross Memorial Park Cemetery. Pallbearers and honorary pallbearers included family and friends as well as members of Boy Scout Troop 226 and members of the El Campo Dragons Baseball team.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Gary Harton Athletic Scholarship Fund at Prosperity Bank in El Campo.

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Museum Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Closed Mondays and Holidays

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Published by The Danish Heritage Preservation Society

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