

The Voice:



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

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **June 12**
Meeting of the Board
of Directors
- **October 23**
The First Annual
**Danish Harvest
Festival**

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President's Report

by Michael Hansen

First, let me introduce myself. I became President in early 2020. My ties to Danevang go back to the earliest days. My great-grandparents on my grandfather's side (Niels Michael and Tomasine Hansen) are considered as part of the Founders of Danevang. My great-grandparents on my grandmother's side (Jorgen and Ane Sophie Ingvarsdson)



came to Danevang in the early 1900s. I grew up spending many a Sunday afternoon visiting my grandparents (Johannes and Agnes Hansen), aunts and uncles and cousins at the original family farm in Danevang. My father was Jack Hansen. We would also attend most of the special community events.

I always took pride in my Danish heritage even though to this day, I haven't yet visited Denmark (which I hope to change once pandemic-imposed travel restrictions are lifted.)

Sandra Petersen, who served competently and faithfully as President for the prior nine years, was ready to step down from the President's role. Thankfully, Sandra is still involved with us even though she also recently stepped down from her role on the Board of Directors. Sandra did so much for this organization that it would be difficult to list it all. All of us – Board
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Saturday, October 23, 2021

Inaugural

Danevang Harvest Festival

We are planning this event to encourage those with ties to Danevang to come back for a visit, and to provide a fun way to introduce Danevang to those who have yet to experience it.

We will serve a lunch of traditional Danish foods. Live music will be provided for your listening and dancing pleasure, and we hope to have the Scandinavian Dancers from the Houston area to entertain us.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us to celebrate Danevang's agricultural activities past and present.

President's Report *continued from page 1*

of Directors and members alike – owe a great debt of gratitude to Sandra and the leadership and efforts she put into the DHPS.

There were other leadership changes that have happened in 2020 and early 2021. **Ralph Petersen** felt the time was right to step down as Vice-President and Board Member. **Sharon Mayhall** was ready to step down as Treasurer. Ralph has been and continues to be an important figure within DHPS. His knowledge and support have been critical to the organization. Sharon served as Treasurer for a number of years and helped us to be good stewards of the financial resources that have been generously given.

Ronnie Wind was elected as Vice President. **Pam**

Petersen Pope moved from the role of Secretary to Treasurer. **Kathi Jensen** is now our Secretary. I truly appreciate the enthusiasm and capabilities that they bring to their offices. **Ronnie** and **Jim Harton** have taken on the oversight and oftentimes the physical work to maintain our buildings and grounds and as a result have saved us money.

Pam did the research and documentation required so the museum could receive federal PPP grants that helped us meet our payroll and utilities expenses during a period when we couldn't do our usual fundraising activities. Kathi agreed to also take over as Editor of this newsletter. I am thankful for my fellow officers.

I have much more to

say about my first year as President but I'll save some of that for the next edition. I'll close with one last topic. I want to thank all of the people that made special donations to help us get through what could have been a financially devastating 2020. Please see the Sponsors/Donations Section on page 6.. We appreciate all donations and donors. Our main fundraiser for several years was a Fun Run. For 2020, the Board had decided to do a different event called The Danevang Harvest Festival and move the event from the Spring to Fall. The COVID pandemic protocols put an end to doing just about any public event in 2020. So, on Saturday, October 23, 2021, we will host the inaugural event.

Staying afloat during the pandemic:

A note from the Treasurer

As many of you know, two *Paycheck Protection Program* (PPP) loans have been offered to businesses and organizations in the past year. As a tax-exempt organization, DHPS was eligible for these loans since we continued to pay our employee during the pandemic. The DHPS Board voted to apply for these programs. The proceeds were granted as loans but, then forgiven if the funds were used in the manner required.

For the first PPP loan, we received \$3,400 on May 29, 2020. We used the funds to pay our museum director's wages and our utilities during the program period. I received notice on November 6, 2020 that the loan was forgiven. Therefore, the loan is basically turned into a grant.

For the second PPP loan, we received \$3,487.50 on February 11, 2021. We have been using these funds for the director's wages during these past months. When we have completed the program period, I will apply for forgiveness for the loan.

We are thankful for this assistance to keep our director working during this difficult time.

Pam Pope
Treasurer

Farming Changes in Danevang

1900 to the Present

by *Ralph E. Petersen*

final part of the series

(1st part published Summer/Fall 2020; 2d in Winter 2021)



Glyphosate (Round-up) gave excellent grass control and good weed control but killed the cotton if it contacted the crop. Genetic modification (GMO) allowed use of glyphosate on top of cotton and worked very well, until some weeds became resistant. Additional GMO allowed the use of glyphosate and 24D or Dicamba on top of the cotton and does an excellent job until weeds become resistant to it.

U.S. government farm programs have been assisting farmers for more than 60 years. These programs have sustained the family farm and allowed U.S. farmers to produce enough food to keep prices low and help feed the world. The family farmer puts all of his efforts into his farm and does such a good job that the cost of food and fiber has been kept to a minimum compared to other living expenses. Corporations have tried to enter farming but have not found it profitable enough. If cor-

poration farms took the place of family farms, they could limit production and result in higher prices for all commodities. Hugh farms, such as communes in Russia, have not appeared to do well.

Several farmers from Danevang were instrumental in forming farm policies through grower organizations. Some of these farmers were **H. D. Madsen** (National Cotton Council), **Lawrence Petersen** (South Texas Cotton and Grain Association and Cotton Incorporated), **Curtis Jensen** (Plains Cotton Cooperative Association), and **Keith Bram** (Danevang Coop, Cotton Incorporated and Texas Boll Weevil Eradication).

Marketing of cotton started with taking a sample from each bale to a cotton buyer in El Campo, Wharton, or Bay City. In the beginning the farmer and buyer would haggle over staple, color, and trash content. **Otto Harton** started buying cotton at the Post Office

in Danevang. The actual bales were stored on the gin yard or in the farmer's yard. Gulf Compress was established in Corpus Christi and when cotton went there, another sample was taken and sent to a government classing office, where it was classed by hand.

In the 1960's Plains Cotton Coop started work to develop what came to be called "High Volume Instrument Testing."

Today, cotton is ginned and an automatic sample is taken and sent to the Corpus classing office, where it is tested for staple, color, leaf, micronaire, strength, and uniformity. In 1975, Plains Cotton Coop Assoc. introduced TELCOT, the first electronic marketing system for cotton. Now a bale can be offered to buyers throughout the world.

In the 1950's, many farmers added grain sorghum, corn and/or soybeans to their crop alternatives.

These crops provided diversification to the

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Farming Changes by *Ralph E. Petersen*

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plant mix for variable prices and yields as well as rotation for weed and disease control. In some areas root rot was a problem but could be reduced by rotation with grain sorghum or corn. Grain sorghum, corn and soybeans were harvested by combine and trucked to Danevang, El Campo, Markham or Houston. The Danevang Coop marketed grain and provided storage if desired. If the grain was harvested with too much moisture, it could be dried and stored or sent to the Port of Houston. The percentage of sorghum to corn was about 90% to 10% respectively, and now is grain sorghum 25% to corn 75%, with some corn stored for local sales to chicken and turkey feeders.

Cotton harvest started with hand picking with transfer in the field to a one-bale trailer pulled by horses. The standard bale, used in international trade, weighs about 500 lbs and measures 54x20x33 inches. This was after the seeds had been removed by gin-

ning and the bale had been compressed. Gins had to be close to the farm. In the early years migrant pickers came each year and helped with the harvest, but these larger groups of pickers required larger trailers and faster gins. Mechanical pickers, first used in the 1950s, sped up harvest even more and required more trailers. Sometimes the gins could not keep up and the trailer had to stay at the gin for two weeks, which made the harvest stop until the trailers were ginned off. Farmers tried dumping cotton on the ground or in the barn but found it impractical to load again. In 1970, module builders were developed, but needed to be built on a large pallet and transported to the gin by a special trailer owned by the farmer. This was not very practical since the trailer was also needed at the gin to handle the module. Some years later, a module truck was designed to pick up the module (12 to 18 bales) off the ground. This allowed pickers to keep running and

the farmer or gin could store picked cotton until it could be ginned. This worked very well, except in rainy periods when modules could not be picked up in the field. Special storage areas were built up by the gins, but even then a bumper crop could overwhelm the system. In 2009, John Deere designed a picker that could make a round bale the size of four standard bales. These round bales are wrapped in plastic by the picker and can be moved to the field edges by the picker. The farmer could also move these round bales to a high spot with a tractor.

There has been a lot of progress. Before the 1950s, a good hand picker could pick about a third of a bale per day. Today a farmer with a modern 6-row round baler can harvest over 250 bales in a day. Danevang has truly seen tremendous changes in farming in the last 120 years.





Thank you, Sandra Petersen!

Fourteen years ago, **Myrna Hansen** asked her friend **Sandra Petersen** to share her expertise on grant-writing with the Danish Heritage Preservation Society.

Sandra agreed, but she didn't realize that her workshop would lead to many years of dedicated and productive service to the Society. She started by writing a successful grant to the Texas Historical Commission, and last fall, she stepped down after serving as President of the board for nine busy years. She and her granddaughter (**Lydia Petersen Dicks**) took over the newsletter and created the current design.

A native of El Campo, Sandra's background is not Danish but rather Swedish and

Norwegian. She met her husband Elwin A. Petersen in high school. Elwin was born in Danevang; his grandfather was one of the community founders. His family moved to Blue Creek when Elwin was a boy, but Sandra and Elwin's brother Donald still own the family's Danevang farm. Elwin died in 2000.

Sandra spent 26 years as an educator and educational administrator, teaching in many places, including Katy ISD. She was assistant principal at Katy High School before being named Director of Alternative Teacher Certification for the Region 4 Education Service Center. (Region 4 serves a seven-county area comprised of 48 public school districts and 40 charter schools).

The activity Sandra said she most enjoyed during her years on the DHPS board was the fun run. "I loved the fun runs," she said. "They were a lot of work, but I got to know so many people."

The biggest asset of the Museum, Sandra said, is the director **Suzan Berndt**. "She keeps the place going," she said. "I just wish we could expand to provide more help for her in order to fully display our collection."

Sandra's years of dedication have made a profound imprint on the Museum, the Board, and the entire community of Danevang. She has earned thanks from all of us, and we look forward to her continued involvement.

If you'd be willing to "save a tree" and receive only a digital copy of this newsletter by email, please let us know. And if you have ideas for articles in future newsletters, we'd love to have them!
kathijensen2@gmail.com, or call 512-940-1228.

Double Platinum (\$5,000 and above)

Carolyn Mitchell
 Bridget Jensen
 Ralph Petersen
 Sandra Petersen

Platinum (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

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 Rice Farmers Co-op / Mr. Tire
 Gerald and Carol Richards
 Marilyn and Phill Richman
 South Texas Land LP
 United Ag

Donations January 1 - May 1, 2021*To the general fund...*

Stephen Schmelling
 Bridget Jensen and Scott Howard
 Dennis D. and Linda Harton
 Poul and April Hornsleth

Memorials...

Kenneth Andersen -- in memory of *Hans T. & Anna, Doris, Virginia, Loraine and Karyl Andersen*
 Brendan & Martha Gau -- in memory of *Al Jensen*
 Carolyn Westerholm -- in memory of *Jetta Westerholm*
 Latrelle Scheiffer -- in memory of *Alfred and Lawrence Harton*
 Country Living Rentals -- in memory of *Concepcion Garza Sr.*
 Lupe & Mary Ramirez -- in memory of *Wilbert Hansen*
 Carol Christensen -- in memory of *Jens P. "Chris" Christensen*
 Harold Christensen -- in memory of *Asta Nygaard*
 Joni & Rick Miller -- in memory of *Zella & Fred Hansen*
 Marilyn & James Sigler -- in memory of *Marin Boline Larsen*
 Country Living Rentals -- in memory of *Olaf & Lillian Hansen*
 Virginia & Jimmie Barosh -- in memory of *Virgil Harton*
 Dorman Michaelsen -- in memory of *Virgil Harton*
 Jim W. & Jennifer Harton -- in memory of *Lawrence and Ernest Harton*
 Jim W. & Jennifer Harton -- in memory of *Verner and Wade Harton*
 Laverne Harton -- in memory of *Verner and Wade Harton*
 Jim W. & Jennifer Harton -- in memory of *Virgil Harton*
 Theresa Harton -- in memory of *Virgil Harton*
 Mike & Suzanne Stanfield -- in memory of *Ken Kidwell*

Virgil Harton

Virgil E. Harton, accomplished architect and artist, died April 17, 2021 at the age of 87.

Virgil is survived by his brothers, Kermit Harton, Sr. (Esther) and Alan Harton (Karen); his sister Ramona Lesak (Robert); his nephew Glenn Harton; nieces Pamela Fleming (Jim), Sherry Long (David), and Kristine Gasson. He was predeceased by his parents; nephews Kermit Harton, Jr. and Gary Harton; and infant niece Sharon Harton.

Virgil was born August 21, 1933 in El Campo, to W.S. (Bill) Harton and Esther Smith Harton. He graduated from El Campo High School at 16. After two years at Wharton County Junior College, he served two years in the Army in Korea (post-war). After graduating from the University of Houston, Virgil was awarded a scholarship for another year of architectural studies. He was then employed by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill and by Bechtel Corporation. Virgil retired at 47 to pursue his passion for painting. He moved to his mountain retreat in McCloud, CA.

He was commissioned by The Breakers (Hotel) in Palm Beach, FL, to provide artwork for The Presidential Suite. Other commissions included The Hearst Foundation and The Lavender Farm in Mt. Shasta, CA. He also provided private lessons at his art studio.

Virgil donated his talent to create and maintain the beautiful charts for the official recorded rainfall for Danevang. He illustrated the charts with scenes of Danevang, including the church, cattle, and cotton fields. The charts are on display at the Museum.

In 2014, Virgil returned to El Campo to be near his family. Virgil was laid to rest at the Danevang Lutheran Church. Pallbearers were Alan Harton, Glenn Harton, Trey Harton, Bryan Powell, David Long, and Jim Fleming. Honorary pallbearers were Fred Vitas, Margot Grisson, Kermit Harton, Sr., Robert Lesak, Kyle Harton, Jacob Harton, and James Gasson.

Memorial donations may be made to Danish Heritage Preservation Society (Danevang) or Houston Hospice-El Campo.

Jetta Lavo Schumacher Koch Westerholm

Jetta Lavo Schumacher Koch Westerholm was born March 2, 1928, in Houston, the only child of Margaret (Hester) and John William Schumacher, Jr. She graduated from Lamar High School in Houston in 1945, and in 1949, she earned a degree in art with a minor in architecture from Rice University. She did post-graduate work at Columbia University, The University of Houston, Houston Baptist University, and Stephen F. Austin University. She taught school in Houston, Lufkin, and Guam.

Married to John Clinton (J.C.) Koch, M.D. for 38 years, Jetta was active in medical auxiliary work, Junior League, church, and youth organizations. In 1962, she and J.C. led a local campaign to distribute polio vaccine to Lufkin residents.

Her other civic work included volunteering at Friends of Kurth Memorial Library, the Forestry Museum, the Mosaic Center, Woodland Heights Medical Center, and ushering at the Temple Theater. She served on the board of the Samaritan Counseling Center, belonged to the Angelina County Historical Commission, the Danish Heritage Preservation Society, the Museum of East Texas, the Historical and Literary Club of Lufkin, and the Anthony Smith Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

After J.C. died, Jetta married Harvey Westerholm in 1993. They enjoyed church and civic work and traveled many places. Jetta maintained ties with her 6th grade Houston friends, getting together into their 90s.

Jetta was preceded in death by her parents, J.C. Koch, M.D. in 1989, Harvey Westerholm in 2002, great-granddaughter Shiloh Grace Conway, and great-granddaughter Claire Fae Caroline Conway.

Survivors include her four children: John C. Koch, Jr. and wife Laura; Jetta Ann McGinniss & husband Rick; Jennifer Conway & husband Stephen; Shannon Westerholm Shadday and husband Kyle. Her nine grandchildren are: David Koch and wife Jacque; Dr. Joseph Koch and wife Dr. Rebekah; Shelley Riehl and husband Chance; Marilyn Sperr and husband Tim; Katie McGinniss; Janelle Strother and husband Ben; Joshua Conway and wife Erica; Dr. Jordan Conway and wife Laci; and Brooke Shadday. She was also blessed with 19 living great-grandchildren: Kimberly, Claire, John William, and Kate Koch; Lydia Lavo, Henry, and Wagner Koch; Jace, Truitt, and Bennett Riehl; Adrienne, Bria, Corbin, and Derrick Sperr; Eli and Jetta Strother; Caleb Conway; and Clifton and Calvin Conway.

Although Jetta would have preferred her funeral to be a huge party with all of her family, friends, and acquaintances in attendance, Covid prevented that. Instead, a small private graveside family gathering led by Randall Green of Lufkin was held on January 9. Jetta was laid to rest in The Garden of Memories Memorial Park in Lufkin.

Memorials may be sent to any church or charity of your choice, or to Hospice in the Pines, 1504 West Frank Ave., Lufkin TX 75904.

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979-578-0808

The Danish Heritage Preservation Society

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Closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays

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