

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pearland Historical Society

P. O. Box 1333

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"Dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of "Old Pearland"

## President's Message

Boy, isn't it hard to believe it's been over a year since **Hurricane Ike** played havoc with **Pearland** and the rest of the **Gulf Coast**. When you drive around **Pearland**, you will still see a roof with a blue tarp on it now and then. Surely do hope we can get through this season without another hurricane of any kind much less one as powerful as "**Ike**" blowing through **Pearland**. Hurricanes have affected the history of **Pearland** starting with the terrible one of 1900. At that time **Pearland** was a 6 year old fast growing community. According to **Mrs. Emma Coppinger (Vic Coppinger's mother)** in a brief history of **Pearland** which she wrote in 1941, at the time of the 1900 storm **Pearland** had over 100 students in school. After the storm, the railroad gave free passage to those who wanted to return to their homes in the mid-west; and the number of students left in school was less than 40! Then in 1915 another terrible hurricane blew through and destroyed the brick school the citizens of **Pearland** had built in 1912. For the next 22 years **Pearland** students were bused to **Webster** to attend high school. It doesn't seem possible another year as gone by since "**Ike**" did his thing.

Speaking of time zipping by always make you think about our need to attract a younger group into our **Historical Society**. Every year at our **Reunion Luncheon** when we light the candles in memory of our members and old time **Pearlanders** who have passed away I think we are all thinking "who's going to take their place?" **Society Member Judy Meade**, who lives in **Bandera, Texas**, came up with a great suggestion which might encourage new and younger members. **Judy's** suggestion is that we

purchase "gift" certificates for one year memberships in the **Historical Society** and give them to relatives and friends and particularly to younger people. You can read more about this further in the **Newsletter**.

Time passes so fast it is hard to realize our **Reunion Luncheon** is just around the corner (Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>). Don't forget to send in your reservation form which is attached on the last page and get your tickets for a great day of remembering what life was like in the small town of **Pearland** we all knew and loved. When I think about our luncheon and seeing all the old friends, I think about the old country western song that **Willie Nelson** sings – "**Ain't it Funny How Times Slips Away**." First verse goes like this:

*Well hello there,  
It's been a long long time  
How am I doing?  
Oh well, I guess I'm doing fine  
It's been so long now and it seems that  
It was only yesterday  
Ain't it funny how time slips away?*

Every time I hear **Willie** sing that song I think about how great it is to see and visit with those old friends at the luncheon. "Ain't it funny how time slips away." Hope to see you October 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Mickey Mark**

## What's Happening

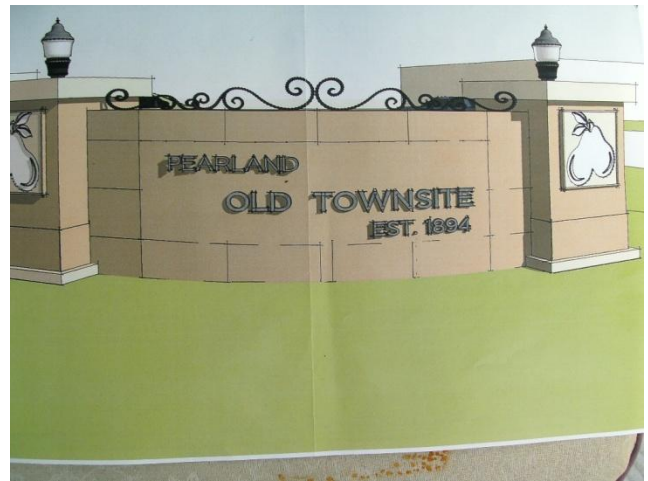
At the July meeting, **Dwight Bittick** presented guidelines his committee is proposing for the selection of homes which will be considered for old **Pearland** historical home plaques. It was suggested that the guidelines be e-mailed to members for their consideration and thoughts. All of the replies have been very positive and we will be moving forward with a program to award plaques to homes which qualify as a "**Pearland Historical Society Old Pearland Historical Home.**"

**Society Treasurer Peggy Farthing Long** reported as of June 30<sup>th</sup> the **Society** had a balance of \$40,599.11. We all owe **Peggy** a big "thank you" for the hard work she does as our **Treasurer**. It is a lot of work and **Peggy** does an outstanding job.

We now have an application form from the **Texas State Historical Commission** to apply for a **Texas State Historical Marker** for "**Robert L. and Julia Martin Hunter Park**" on **Orange Street**. The "**Park**" is on property which originally was part of the **Robert L. and Julia Martin Hunter** homestead. **Julia Martin** came to **Pearland** in 1894. **Robert L. Hunter's** father, **Dr. Johnson Calhoun Hunter**, came to **Texas** as one of **Moses Austin's** original 300. **Robert L. Hunter** came to **Pearland** in 1900. So the property where the **Park** now is has a rich **Texas and Pearland** history; and it becomes our task to document the history and get the marker. Procedure is we will have to send the application through the **Brazoria County Historical Commission** who will have to approve the application and forward it on to the **State**. **Hurricane Ike's** impact and unexpected budget expenses have set the **Parks and Recreation Department's** time schedule back for the **Park**. Also the **City** will be putting drainage pipes from **Plum Street** down **Park Street** and through **Hunter Park** to **Town Ditch** before the **Park** can be finished.

The "**Old Townsite Neighbors**" continue to meet the first Thursday of each month; however there will be no meetings for the next two months. **Kyler Cole** and wife **Shannon** are expecting their first born child (a boy) the last of **September**. Further in the **Newsletter** are pictures of the homes with the "**Yard of the Month**" for the last two months.

At the last "**Old Townsite**" meeting, **Kyler Cole** showed those in attendance a drawing of an "**Old Townsite**" entrance monument which will be built at the intersection of **Highway 518 west and Walnut Street**. Although technically the "**Old Townsite**" does not start until one reaches **Austin Street**, the little triangle at **518 and Walnut** is an ideal spot for this monument which will let motorists know they are about to enter "**Old Pearland.**" Our **Historical Society** is very appreciative of the work **Kyler** and the **Old Townsite** group are doing to improve old **Pearland**.



## Among our Members

**Society** member **Jeannie Matlock Savell** passed away September 14<sup>th</sup>. **Jeannie** was a 1962 graduate of **PHS** and for many years she and husband **Charles "Cookie" Savell** lived out west of town on 518 just west of **Cullen**. For the last few years they have lived in **Onalaska** up on **Lake Livingston**.

**Society** member and long time **Pearland** resident **LaVerne Hunt** passed away July 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 95. She was a dedicated and tireless worker for many years for the **Pearland First Methodist Church** and was a member of **Pearland's American Business Women's Association**. Our sympathies go out to **LaVerne's** son **Charlie** and daughter **Camille Hunt Garner** and family.



**LaVerne Hunt**

Also several long time **Pearland** residents passed away since the last Newsletter. **Carolyn Gilmore**, wife of “**Coach**” **Dave Gilmore** passed away July 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Coach Gilmore** was a coach and taught math at **Pearland High School** for many years. **Carolyn** and **Dave** were also long time members of the **Pearland First Methodist Church**.

**Ann Hall**, mother of **Johnnie** and **Gary Hall** passed away August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Winston Fuller** passed away August 5<sup>th</sup>. You may recall from the last Newsletter that **Winston’s** wife, **Nell Fuller**, also passed away on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Long time **Pearland** resident **Harry Vickers** passed away Aug. 9th. **Harry** was a former **Pearland ISD** transportation employee. His wife, **Diane Vickers**, is a long time **Pearland ISD** employee as a clerk at **Pearland Jr. High West**.

Another long time **Pearlander**, **Don Cote**, passed away August 10<sup>th</sup> at the age of 90. As you drive around the **Pearland** area, you can see many memorials to **Don Cote** in the form of ornamental metal windmills which **Don** built at his home on **Fite Road**. Our sincere sympathies go out to daughter and **Society Member Lou Cote McKendree** and family.

**Christine Beck**, 1955 **PHS** graduate and youngest daughter of long time **Pearland** family **Hubbard and Gladys Beck**, passed away August 16<sup>th</sup>. **Christine** was a resident of **Wharton, Texas**.

It is always sad to report the passing of our members and long time **Pearlanders**. It is particularly sad to report the death of a 23 year old granddaughter of one of our **Historical Society** members. **Arie Elizabeth Crosby**, 23 year old granddaughter of former **Pearlander Herbert Alexander**, passed away Sept. 2 in San Antonio, Texas. **Herbert**, a 1951 **PHS** graduate and wife **Phyllis** are now living in **Concan, Texas**.

Please keep **Society** members **Jimmy Peel** and **Pat Talbot Burkett** in your prayers. They are both going through some rough times health wise. **Jimmy** was scheduled to have colon surgery back in **August** but prior to the surgery he had to be off the drug “**plavix**” for awhile. After 5 days of being off **plavix**, **Jim** had a severe heart attack. Consequently he is now awaiting both a heart by-pass operation and a colon surgery. **Pat** is in the hospital with pneumonia.

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### **Good News**

Congratulations to members **Larry and Nancy Phillips** who celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a great anniversary party with literally hundreds of their friends in attendance at the **Alvin Knights of Columbus Hall** on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Prior to the party, **Larry and Nancy** celebrated with an anniversary trip to **Alaska**.

Must have been the hot **Texas** summer. **Society** members **Barbara Burkett Lilley** and husband **Claude** along with **Martha Ann Keonitzer Matkin** and husband **Mickey** also took an **Alaskan** cruise back in mid-August. Understand all went great except for a bit of sea sickness for **Martha Ann**.

Congratulations are also in order for **Society Member Pat Cook Thibodeaux** who became **Mrs Willis Brignac** on August 21<sup>st</sup>. **Pat** and new husband **Willis** celebrated their marriage with a trip to **Branson, Mo**. **Pat** says that **Willis** has spent most of his life in **Louisiana** but they will continue to make their home in **Liberty, Texas**. **Willis** has 5 children and 8 grandchildren. **Pat** has 2 children and 6 grandchildren; so there will be some great family get togethers. Here’s wishing **Pat and Willis** a world of happiness.

## Some very special birthdays

Although we often write about the need for our **Society** to recruit younger members, we are also very fortunate to have several members who are now in their 90's. What a wealth of knowledge and wisdom these members have regarding **Pearland** and the way it was when people spoke of "**Pearland**" they were talking about what we now call "**Old Pearland Townsite**." We have two members who turned 99 this year. **Eunice Martin Jones**, who now lives in **LaCross, Wisconsin** turned 99 on **July 25<sup>th</sup>**. **Mary Lee Smith Miller** also turned 99 on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. One of the first interviews done for the **Newsletter** was with **Mary Lee** back in 1995. At the time **Mary Lee** recalled that when she and husband **Jack Miller** built their home on the corner of **Orange and Austin Streets** (which was to be her home for the next 60 years), she spoke of being "out in the country" with nothing but bare prairie with no trees all around them. Congratulations to **Eunice** and **Mary Lee** and also to other **Society** members who belong to the 90's club. Others in the club are **Emma Jamison Wells**, (**Pearland's** oldest native born citizen) **Mamie Williamson**, **Hazel Muetz**, **Bill Bradley**, **Nina Hill**, **Ethel Nelson**, **Claudia Martin** and the newest member **Ernest Cogbill**. Hope we didn't overlook anyone.



**Eunice Martin Jones with daughter and son-in-law Murnice and Paul Lobosco at her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday party.**



**Mary Lee Smith Miller with Nita Jo Pitts Duty at Reunion Luncheon**



**Emma Jamison Wells who will be 97 Nov. 1st Pearland's oldest native born citizen**

**Society Member Ernest Cogbill** also joined the elite 90's club on August 22<sup>nd</sup> when the **Cogbill** family celebrated **Ernest's** birthday and also had a **Cogbill** family reunion at the **Bella Vita** party room in **Pearland**.



**Ernest Cogbill with cousin at 90<sup>th</sup> birthday Party. Cousin is daughter-in-law of Margaret Cogbill Tollett**



**Cogbills at Ernest’s Birthday Bash and Cogbill reunion**  
**Top Row: L-R: Michael Stringer, Jessica Stringer (Ernest’s granddaughter); Christine Cogbill Diehl (Ernest’s daughter); Taylor Diehl**  
**Bottom Row: L-R: J. T. Richardson, Anna Cogbill Richardson (Ernest’s daughter); Ricky Cogbill (Ernest’s son); Mildred Cogbill (Ernest’s sister); Ernest; Alford Cogbill (Ernest’s oldest son); Dennis Diehl, William Diehl, Garrett Diehl (Christine Cogbill Diehl’s sons, Ernest’s grandsons)**

The **Cogbill** family has a long and interesting history in **Pearland**. Their family history written by **Charles “Chink” Logan** is both in our files and a copy in the time capsule in **Zychlinski Park**. In a future issue of the **Newsletter** we will be telling the **Cogbill** story. We have written about the **O’Day** business, the **Garner Cleaner’s** business and **Joan Baker’s** beauty shop business as the oldest continuous family businesses in **Pearland**. The **Cogbill** family also has a long history of a continuous business in **Pearland**. You will be reading about it later.

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**Old Townsite Homes of the Month**

The selection for the **old townsite** home of the month for the month of **August** was the beautiful home of **Carl and Jennie Talbot** on **Grand Blvd**. The home was designed and built by **Carl** who is a retired architect.

The home of the month for **September** is the **Carol Artz’s** home on **Galveston Street**. **Carol** is the **Director of the Pearland Chamber of Commerce**. Her unique and beautiful home was originally a small farm house. Some of our readers will remember the **Bruce Crites** family living there. Others will remember **Victor Coppinger** remodeling and living there. **Carol** keeps the yard immaculate.



Carl and Jennie Talbot’s Home on Grand Blvd.



Carol Artz’s Home on Galveston Street

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**A Look Back – Buster the beer drinking buffalo**

I recently got an e-mail from **Steve Wynn** who is a retired **Pearland** school teacher with long ties to **Pearland**. His Mother is **Della Ann Dimmitt Wynn**, a 1945 graduate of **Pearland**. The **Dimmitt** family was one of the pioneer **Pearland** families. In his e-mail **Steve** said while at his Mother’s house in **Wharton** he found the **September 08 Newsletter** which **Della Ann’s** cousin **Howard Patterson** up in **Colorado Springs, Colorado** had sent her. **Steve** was interested in the comments about 5 legged **Brahman** bull and beer drinking buffalo which were an attraction at a place called “**The Country Store**” down at **Hastings**. Apparently many of our members remembered seeing the beer guzzling buffalo and 5

legged bull. We had a good number of responses recalling seeing the buffalo drinking beer. **Sandy Martin Scott and Larry Phillips** remembered the owner's name was **J. B. Choate**. When **Steve** read the story he remembered being at the **Country Place** with his son **Jason** back in 1981 when **Jason** was 4 years old. He also remembered having a picture of himself and **Jason** giving the buffalo a bottle of beer. **Steve** said the buffalo's name was "**Buster**". As you can see in the picture **Buster** is definitely drinking and appears to be enjoying the beer **Steve** is holding for him. **Steve** remembered seeing a buffalo there back in the 70's and the fellow at the store saying that was his 2<sup>nd</sup> buffalo. Both were named "**Buster**". Our apologies go out to **Steve**. We couldn't get all of **Steve** and all of **Buster** in the picture. It was a tough decision but **Buster** won out; so we had to cut off part of **Steve**. Sorry about that **Steve**.



"Buster" the buffalo enjoying a bottle of beer courtesy of Steve Wynn in 1981.

Thanks for the picture, **Steve**. I seem to recall **Leon Hale** writing a story about the beer drinking buffalo in one of his column's for the old **Houston Post**. Don't you imagine old **Buster** sold many a bottle of beer for **Mr. Choate**? I wonder if **Mr. Choate** told customers **Buster** didn't like cheap beer? An interesting bit of history.

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### PHS Class of 59 Celebrates

The **Pearland High School** graduating class of **1959** had a great reunion celebration **September 11<sup>th</sup>** and **12<sup>th</sup>**. **Saturday** night, **Sept.12<sup>th</sup>**, the group had dinner

and a great reunion celebration at **Juanito's Restaurant** on **Grand Blvd.** **Dwight Bittick** reports everyone had a great time; and I am sure all were appreciative to receive the "**Pearland High School Class of 1959**" DVD which **Dwight** gave to each of those in attendance. It's great to get together with old classmates and teachers. Teachers in attendance were **Phyrne Cousins O'Day** and **W. H. "Jug" Backhaus**. Hope to see many of the 59 grads at the **Historical Society Reunion Luncheon on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>**.



PHS Class of 1959

**Front Row L/R:** **W. H. Backhaus, Phyrne O'Day, Evelyn Yost Jones, Mary Alice Kliesing Yost, Judy Mahanay Moore, Evangelina Rico Nava, Ann Farthing Peirsol, Aurora Corpus Rodriquez**  
**Back Row L/R:** **Dwight Bittick, Sandra McNeil Collins, Peggy Palmer Marasckin, Mary Fernandez Perez, Bob Nelson, Linn Ready, Brenda Martin Riggs, Carolyn Garner McCoy, Cecil Johnson, Douglas Prensner, Larry Payne, Ann Lane Crosswhite, Alton Davidson, Charlie Rives**

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### A Suggestion for a Gift

We all often talk of the need for new and younger members to join the **Pearland Historical Society**. Each issue of the **Newsletter** usually has one or two or more sad notes about members who have passed away. As mentioned earlier **Society Member Judy Meade** suggested what seems like a great idea. **Judy's** suggestion was for members to consider giving a "gift" subscription to someone they know whom they feel would enjoy being a member of the **Pearland Historical Society** and who would perhaps be someone who would have new thoughts and ideas for the Society. In that vein, the application for membership attached to the **Newsletter** has a form

for gift memberships. If you wish to give a gift membership, please fill out the “gift membership form” and mail it just as you would your own membership. When we receive the “gift membership” we will send a notice to the recipient advising him/her as to who has been thoughtful enough to give him/her the gift membership in the **Pearland Historical Society**. Thanks, **Judy**, for a great idea.

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### Old Street Signs for Sale

Want to have a bit of **Pearland** history for a souvenir?

Most of our readers probably recall the new “**Old Townsite**” street signs which the **Pearland Old Townsite Business Coalition** placed in the **Old Townsite**. At our **Reunion Luncheon** on **Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>**, you will have an opportunity to purchase the old street signs which were taken down and replaced with the historic district signs.

The **Old Townsite Business Coalition** will have a table set up in the foyer of the **Community Center** in front of the **Parks and Recreation** office and will be selling the signs on a first come, first served basis. The **Coalition** will also be advertising the sale in both **Pearland Newspapers**. The regular sized street signs (12” x 30”) will sell for \$100 each. The larger signs for **Broadway, Main, Galveston, FM518, and SH 35** (ranging in size from 12” x 42” to 18” x 96”) will sell for \$150 each. The money from the sales will go toward the purchase of the historical banners for the lamp posts on **Grand Blvd.** Sales will begin at 11 A.M. and conclude at 2:00 P.M. Sales are to be cash (correct change only) or by checks made out to the “**Old Townsite Business Coalition**”.

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### Remembering When Pearland Town Team topped the New York Yankees

Much has been said and written about the Sunday afternoon baseball games at **Zychlinski Park** and what a prominent place “town team baseball” holds in the history of **Pearland**. When the discussion of baseball comes up, many old time **Pearland** family names are quickly remembered - - **Yost, Jamison, Maness, Massey, Lane**, and many others. Many stories have been told about the town teams. Some of you may remember the story about the disappearing

tree from center field or “**Fuzzy**” **Hufft**’s mighty blast; but **Luther Cunningham** recently recalled a story often told by **Lloyd Yost** wherein **Lloyd** presented the case that the **Pearland Town Team** one year was better than the world champion **New York Yankees**. **Luther** recalled the story went something like this. **Pearland** played and beat the prison team from **Sugar Land**. The prison team from **Sugar Land** played and beat the prison team from **Huntsville**. The **Huntsville** prison team played and beat the **Huntsville Merchants**. The **Huntsville Merchants** played and beat the old **Texas League Houston Buffs**. The **Houston Buffs** played and beat the **New York Yankees** in a spring training exhibition game. The **Yankees** went on to win the **World Series**. So by logic, **Pearland** could have beaten the **World Champion New York Yankees!!** We actually did have some pretty good **Pearland** town teams.



1951 PHS District Champions – At home field Zychlinski Park

Back Row L/R: **Jack Burton, Luther Cunningham, John Cunningham, A. C. Garner, Coach W. H. “Jug” Backhaus, Edwin Long, J. C. Nichols Buddy Rozell**  
 Front Row L/R: **Leo “Butch” Parker, Bennie Trousdale, John “Boots” Yost, Jesse Rodriguez, Charles “Red” Nichols, Bobby Watson**

Speaking of baseball and of the **New York Yankees**, probably the most quoted of any **Yankee** player is **Yogi Berra**. The following is supposedly a true quote from **Yogi**:

*An interviewer started to ask **Yogi Berra** about his two hits from the previous night when **Berra** corrected him and said he had three hits. The interviewer apologized. “I checked the paper and the boxscore said you had two hits. The third must have been a typographical error.”*

*“Hell, no,” **Berra** replied. “It was clean single to left.”*

## Don't Forget the Reunion Luncheon

Our annual **Historical Society Reunion Luncheon** is coming up Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be back at the **Pearland Community Center** again this year. Time is from 12 noon to 4:00 P.M. with the barbecue lunch being served sometime around 12:30 P.M. It has been suggested that we should put out some directions as to how to get to the **Community Center** since **Pearland** is no longer the small community it once was and many people may not know where the community center is. Here are the directions;

*From the corner of Highway 35 and 518 (Main and Broadway) take 518 east toward Friendswood. Go to the intersection of 518 and Liberty Drive to the right. To the left will be Green Tee. Take a right on Liberty Drive and go past the old Depot and City Hall on the left. You will see the parking lot and community center just past City Hall.*

The barbecue lunch will again be catered by **Central Texas Barbecue**, which many people feel has the finest barbecue in **Texas**. The price of the lunch continues to be \$8 per plate.

We will not be honoring a specific PHS graduating class this year. Next year we will return to honoring the class which graduated 50 years earlier.

Our decorating committee of **Carleen Nichols Mark, Carolyn Garner McCoy and Karen Kliesing** say they will again be featuring a patriotic red, white and blue theme at this year's luncheon.



Memorial candle holder built by **David Scott**, Pearland's oldest native born male citizen.

Individual candles will be lit for **Historical Society Members** who have passed away this year. **David Scott** will light the large red candle in memory of long time **Pearlanders** who have passed away during the year. **Historical Society** members for whom candles will be lit are:

**Oleta Campbell Hawkins**

**Wayne Long**

**Annetta Parker Childress**

**Frank Waddle**

**Rosalie Miller Acree**

**Colonel Jack Dempsey**

**Laverne Hunt**

**Jeannie Matlock Savell**

Be sure to get your tickets to the luncheon. We often comment about how rare it is to go to the store or to a restaurant in **Pearland** now and see anyone we know. This is your chance to see and visit with friends you haven't seen in awhile. We will be looking for you.

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**Don't forget the quarterly Historical Society Meeting, Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 P.M. at the Knapp Senior Citizens Center on Park Street. Cold drinks, Coffee, and homemade cookies and visitation follow the meeting.**

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*Money isn't everything  
But it sure keeps the children in touch.*

*Unknown*



**RETURN THIS FORM TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE AT THE PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY "REUNION LUNCHEON" SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 AT THE PEARLAND COMMUNITY CENTER. TICKETS ARE \$8.00 PER PERSON**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, count me in for a good time at the annual Historical Society Reunion Luncheon.  
Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for luncheon tickets.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE OR GUEST'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Pearland Historical Society, P.O. Box 1333, Pearland, Texas 77588



**Membership Form - - Pearland Historical Society**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ covering membership dues of \$15 per person for the following persons for the year 2009. Is this a gift membership?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Note: Dues paid in the last quarter of the year cover the following year.**

**Mail to: Pearland Historical Society, P.O. Bo 1333, Pearland, Texas 77588**

**Please note: If you are paying for gift memberships, please give the name and address of the person who is presenting the gift so that we can notify the recipient.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_





