

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The **January** issue of the **Newsletter** brought forth a number of comments from **Society** members about the number of members and old time **Pearlanders** we are losing each quarter. No doubt we do need to find some way to get younger persons involved in our **Historical Society**. Several years ago someone asked me the question, "what qualifies someone to be classified as an old time **Pearlander**?" My answer at that time was "if he/she can remember when **Pearland** had one blinking traffic light at the intersection of **518 and 35 (Main @ Broadway)** and can remember the old **drug store** on one corner and the **Crossroads Inn** on the other corner then he/she is an old time **Pearlander**." Well, each quarter as we lose more members those type "old time **Pearlanders**" are becoming few and far between.

We all have discussed the need for "young blood" in our **Historical Society**. At the last meeting in **January**, **Dwight Bittick** came up with an excellent suggestion. **Dwight's** suggestion was that we try to get more younger persons to contribute articles to the quarterly **Newsletter**. Throughout the years most of the personal stories and remembrances in the **Newsletter** have been from and about those of us who went to the old **Pearland High School** in the 30's, 40's, or 50's or perhaps to **Webster High School** before **Pearland** built a high school in 1937. When the **Historical Society** started up back in 1984, those of us who were of the 30's, 40's and 50's decades in school had been out of school 30, 40 or 50 years. Now those **PHS** grads of the 60's, 70's and 80's have been out of school 30, 40 or 50 years; so if we were "old time **Pearlanders**" back in 1984 then those of the 60's, 70's, and 80's are certainly "old time **Pearlanders**" today.

In that vein, we have invited the younger group to contribute their stories and remembrances of earlier days in **Pearland**. In this issue is a very interesting and well written story from **Linda Eastridge Kinkade**, who begins the story as an 11 year old in the "only **Jr. High School**" in **Pearland** in 1976. To many of us 1976 is "just yesterday"; which sort of makes my point about needing younger members. At any rate, thanks go out to **Linda** for her story; and I hope in the future we have more contributions from the younger set; and let's all encourage participation in the **Pearland Historical Society** by the younger "old time **Pearlanders**."

Hope to see you at our quarterly meeting **Tuesday** night, **April 20<sup>th</sup>** at **Knapp Center**. Meeting starts at 7:00 P.M. Homemade cookies, coffee, soft drinks and visitation with old friends follows the meeting. Try to find a "younger old time **Pearlander**" to invite to the meeting.

Mickey Mark

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**Just a reminder. Have you paid your dues for 2010 yet? The \$15 yearly fee is due the first of each year.**

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## AMONG OUR MEMBERS

Long time **Pearland Historical Society** member, **Luciele Seger Anderson** passed away **January 28th** at the age of 90. **Luciele**, who lived at **Santa Fe, Texas**, stayed in touch with what was going on in **Pearland** and often called to comment about things she had read in the "**Newsletter**". **Luciele** was one of the 12 graduates of the **PHS class of 1939**.

Society member **Mamie Watson Williamson** passed away **February 20<sup>th</sup> at Windsong Nursing Home.** **Mamie**, who was 96, was always an upbeat, interesting lady to visit with. She will definitely be missed.

Long time **Pearland** resident, **Nordema Arbuckle Ellis** passed away February 18<sup>th</sup>. **Nordema** was one of those “unforgettable” people; and everyone at her funeral had a funny story to tell about **Nordema**. She told it like it was and was a very good person.

Another long time **Pearlander, J. H. “Buddy” Edwards** passed away **January 22<sup>nd</sup>.** **Buddy** was living at an **Alvin** assisted living facility at the time of his death. **Buddy’s** son, **Lane**, was a 1975 grad of **PHS** and daughter **Laura** a 1977 grad.

Former **Pearlander** and former **Pearland Historical Society** member **Sarah Wark** passed away **Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>** in **Temple, Texas.** **Sarah** and her first husband, **Woodrow Lesikar**, had an insurance agency in **Pearland** for many years. Her daughter, **Carolyn**, and son, **Woody**, graduated from **Pearland High School.**

Former **Pearlander Tommy Matlock** passed away **Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Several of our members have been experiencing some health problems recently.

As mentioned in the **January** issue of the **Newsletter, Brenda Martin Riggs** has been battling lymphoma and undergoing chemo-therapy. Brenda has had a real struggle and is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of chemo.

**Judy Mahanay Moore** underwent gastric bypass surgery recently and experienced some problems; but we understand she is now doing better.

**Society Member George Cates** up in **Missouri** recently had some problems with irregular heartbeats and had to have a pacemaker implanted. Good to report **George** says he is “feeling great.” Way to go, **George.** We are all looking forward to those home grown apples you bring to the **Reunion Luncheon** every year.

Another out of town member, **Veora Hunter**, up in **Denver, Colorado** recently suffered a bad fall **Easter** morning breaking her arm near the shoulder. Be careful, **Veora**, and hope you have a rapid recovery.

A couple of our members have gone through a double “whammy”; but fortunately both have survived and seem to be doing very well. **Jimmy Peel** was scheduled to have colon surgery several months ago; but prior to the surgery; **Jim** had a heart attack and had to undergo by-pass surgery before he could have the colon surgery. Now he has had both surgeries behind him and reports he is feeling good.

**Larry Phillips** underwent knee replacement surgery back in **January** and all went very well. Then in early **March, Larry** had to also have heart by-pass surgery. It is good to report that **Larry** is also doing very well.

Please continue to keep all of our members who are having health problems in your prayers.

Longtime **Historical Society Member** and long time **Pearlander, Pat Talbot Burkett** will be moving to **Michigan** to live with daughter **Toni** in late **April.** **Pat** will certainly be missed and we all extend her our very best wishes.



**Pat Burkett (left) and Frances Johnston at Historical Society Luncheon**



## WHAT’S HAPPENING

Our **January** meeting was a good one. A few important issues were as follows: Members voted to raise the price of the luncheon from \$8 per person to \$10 each. **Treasurer Peggy Farthing Long** pointed out that we have held the

price at \$8 per person ever since we started the luncheon. Our cost now exceeds \$8 each, and also the \$10 price will make it much easier for those working at the reception table to make change for those who buy a ticket at the door.

It was also voted unanimously to continue to use **Central Texas Barbecue Company** to cater the luncheon.

Thanks go out to the **Pearland Parks & Recreation Department** for replacing the rusting wrought iron fence at the **“Old Settlers’ Cemetery”**. Looks a lot better. Apparently, the two horse heads in front which were donated by the **Massey** family several years ago have also been repainted. Good job.



**Old Settlers’ Cemetery – pictures courtesy Dwight Bittick**



The **Pearland High School** graduating class of 1960 will be the honored class at the **Reunion Luncheon**. According to the 1962 Silver Anniversary edition of the **Pearland Gusher** yearbook, the class of 1960 was a very large class for that time with 27 graduates.

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**Josie’s Oak Tree Survives Widening of Main**

One of the land marks in **“Old Pearland”** is the majestic oak tree on **Main Street** just south of the **Pearland State Bank**. Long time **Pearlanders** were

concerned that the future widening project for **Main Street** from **Beltway 8 to Walnut Street** proposed by The **Texas Department of Transportation** would mean the demise of this historic old oak tree. Fortunately, according to the latest information from **TXDOT** the tree will be spared.



**Historic Oak Tree on Main St.**

In 1927 **William Frankenberger** passed away and to honor his memory **Josie** and her **Mother** planted a very slender oak sapling. The huge spreading oak you see now was little more than a twig when planted in 1927. **Josie Frankenberger Heflin** lived to be over 100 years of age, most of those years in the home behind the oak tree. She was a walking encyclopedia of **Pearland** history. Upon her death in 1999 the **Pearland Historical Society** received 6 big scrapbooks of priceless historical information. The old oak tree she and her **Mother** planted in memory of her **Father** in 1927 has seen many changes to the main street of the little town of **Pearland**. Wouldn’t it be interesting if that old tree could talk. Let’s hope it survives those future changes.

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**First Old Townsite Historic Homes**

At the **January** meeting, **Dwight Bittick, Chairman of the Historic Home Selection Committee** made the motion that the **Long** home at **2230 North Houston Avenue** and the **Cunningham** home at **2416 South Washington Avenue** be selected as **Pearland’s** first **Pearland Historical Society** old townsite historic homes. Motion was approved unanimously.

**Long Family Home – 2230 North Houston Avenue**



Long family 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generation on porch 2010 in a picture similar to 1<sup>st</sup> generation in picture below. Pictured are Edwin & Peggy in rocking chairs; Ken Long and wife Jena far right,; Lisa Long Bates DeHoyas and David DeHoyas standing nearest steps. Children are Regan Long and Berkely Long, daughters of Ken & Jena and Charles and Michael Bates, sons of Lisa Long Bates DeHoyas.

This is the **Long** home today. Home of **Peggy and Edwin Long**. Home has been in the same family since built in approx. 1910 by **Edwin Long's** great grandfather **John Howard**. Second generation owner was great aunt **Mag Howard Tholen**.

Third generation owner was **Edwin's** parents **Ernie and Dora Davidson Long**.

Fourth generation **Delores Long Van Eman**, daughter of **Ernie and Dora Long** purchased the house from her great aunt **Mag Howard Tholen's** estate.

Fourth generation **Edwin and Peggy Long** purchased the house from **Delores Van Eman Stevenson** and are the current owners.



**Howard, Tholen, Long family on porch approx. 1910**

**Cunningham Family Home – 2416 S. Washington Ave.**



**Luther and Helen Cunningham in front yard of historic home.**

This beautiful old home was also built about 1910 by **Mr. & Mrs. Woody Palmer** who came to **Pearland** from **Canada** via way of **Kansas**. The home was purchased by **Mrs. Helen Alexander** and given to her son, **Tom**, as a wedding gift in the late 1940's. Home was purchased by **Luther and Helen Cunningham** in **Dec. 1975** and remains their home today. Below is a picture of the home taken approx. 1925. The child in the old picture is **Society member Margurite Massey Smith**.



**Palmer house approx. 1925. Gives us an idea of the great amount of work **Luther and Helen** have put into this historic home.**

The two home owners will each be given a plaque from the **Pearland Historical Society** recognizing each as an old townsite **Pearland Historical Society** historic home. It was voted at the **January** meeting to have the **Historic Home Committee** submit one home each quarter for consideration as a **Pearland Historical Society** historic home.

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**Farmers’ Market Off to Good Start**

Thanks to a lot of very hard work by **Society Member Cassie Mitchel** and some beautiful spring weather the **Farmers’ Market at Zychlinski Park** has gotten off to a very good start. The market is set up on the **2<sup>nd</sup>** and **4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays** of each month and is open from **9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.**



**Cassie Mitchel with Uncle Luther Cunningham at Farmers’ Market – Picture courtesy Dwight Bittick**

Although it has been a bit early for a lot of produce **Froberg Farms** from **Alvin** has been selling a lot of strawberries. Also there have been booths selling home grown grass fed beef and another selling goat cheese. **Cassie** has worked really hard with **Pearland City** officials to get the **Market** going and to make it an event to enhance the old townsite.

Speaking of **“Old Townsite”**, please keep in mind the **Old Townsite Group** meets the first **Thursday** of each month at **7:00 P.M.** at the **Church of Christ** annex on **Grand Blvd.** **Old Townsite Co-ordinator Kyler Cole** conducts the meetings; and it is always interesting to hear what is going on in the old part of **Pearland.**



**Kyler and Shannon Cole with son, Eli, at Farmers’ Market – Picture courtesy Dwight Bittick**

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**Members Attend Historical Commission Workshop**

Back on **January 26<sup>th</sup>** **Luther Cunningham, Dwight Bittick and Mickey Mark** attended an all day work seminar on collections policies and documentation of materials in setting up a **Historical Museum.** The seminar, presented by the **Texas Historical Commission,** was at the **Museum in Lake Jackson.** The seminar offered a lot of good tips on how to keep track of both permanent and loaned items in a museum and will be quite helpful when the **“Old Depot”** becomes a **Pearland Historical Museum.**

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**The Cost of a Good Football Program in 1951**

Among the items in the **Historical Society** files are several copies of old **“Pearland Gusher”** newspapers from past years. It is always interesting to read about what was going on back in those days when every student knew every other student in high school and probably most of the students in elementary schools. In a **December, 1951** issue of the **“Gusher”**, **Mr. J. D. Gray, Superintendent** of schools posted a **“Football Financial Statement”** to show the people the **“cost of maintaining and operating a well equipped football squad.”**



**Superintendent J. D. Gray**

**Mr. Gray** points out that the gate receipts do not cover the expenses by “quite a large sum”. Let’s take a look at those “large sums.”

During the 1951 season, the home gate receipts were \$1,367.43 and the contracts away from home netted \$360 for a total income of \$1,727.43.

- Mr. Gray** goes on to point out that the income covered just a little better than half the expenses.
- Expenses were: **Insurance on the players: \$108.76**
- Equipment and supplies: \$1476.00**
- District dues: \$9.00**
- Officials: \$219.50**
- Letters and sweaters: \$264.00**
- Games contracts for visiting schools: \$250.00**
- Boys’ meals for away from home: \$147.00**
- Doctor bills: \$30.00**
- Laundry bills: \$104.64**
- Total expenses: \$2,608.89**

**Mr. Gray** further states that the expenses still do not include the cost of transportation nor lights. So the football program for 1951 cost the school district the hefty sum of \$881.46. Wow!!! **Mr. Gray** stated that the statement was issued to show the citizens the cost of operating a first class football program to provide the best of equipment.

It would be interesting to know what the costs for the **Pearland Oiler** football program were in 2009. Probably a little more than \$881.46.

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In that same issue of “**The Gusher**” there is an interesting story involving one of our **Historical Society Members - - Buddy Rozell**.

The story, written by **Bobby Watson**, tells of **Pearland’s** 44 – 42 loss to **Sugarland** (at that time spelled as one word) in a down to the wire basketball game. In that game **Buddy Rozell** led the **Oilers** in scoring with 30 points. Thirty of the total of 42 is pretty good; but in the first half, **Buddy** scored 18 of the 19 **Oilers’** points. **Bobby** wrote, “***Buddy Rozell was hitting the basket with everything but his shoes***”

A very colorful comment!!! Also, in the story, **Bobby** writes that the star for **Sugarland** was the sophomore phenom, **Kenneth Hall**. A name that later was known by a lot of people as a high school football super star who still holds **Texas Interscholastic** football scoring records and later as a super punt returner for the **Houston Oilers**. Today’s sports writers would surely say “***Buddy was in a zone.***”

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### **A Bit of History**

Previously, we discussed who qualified as an old time **Pearlander**. You probably have to be classified as an “older old time **“Pearlander”** to remember the turmoil which went on in the little town of **Pearland** (population 1500) back in 1959. What was the turmoil? It was whether or not **Pearland** should become an incorporated city or remain as they were - an unincorporated community. At the time **Pearland** had a water control and improvement district which provided water and sanitary sewage to most of the citizens; and a garbage pickup service was being provided by a private concern.

The proponents for incorporation cited two primary reasons for incorporating. The first reason was to keep **Houston** from annexing **Pearland**. Reason two was publicly stated by the proponents was that **Pearland** was growing and with incorporation the citizens could get anything for which they were willing to pay - -municipal buildings, libraries, museums, recreation facilities, etc.

The opponents sent out a letter to all citizens stating that **Houston Mayor Lewis Cutrer** had emphatically denied having any plans to annex **Pearland**. The letter also agreed that the citizens would get whatever they wanted to pay for: and *“will pay for it very dearly”*; and went on to say taxes could easily be from \$50,000 to \$500,000 yearly. The letter was signed by a group of prominent and well known citizens.

On **November 21, 1959** the citizens of **Pearland** went to the polls and voted for incorporation. We don't have a record of the totals. After the vote on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> for incorporation, the first **Pearland** city election was set up for **December 12, 1959**. Candidates were as follows:

**For Mayor:** Mrs. Fannie Clegg (Attorney)  
 E. T. Gibbons (Variety Store Operator)  
 Clinton Cunningham (Real Estate Dealer)

**For Council:** Five were to be elected.  
 William King, Owen Maynor, Wayne Miller, Victor Nolan, Richard Swenson, David L. Smith, Jr., Basil Cogill, Lloyd Hawkins, Victor Coppinger, G. C. Stallings, W. E Parker, and Tom Alexander.

**For City Marshall:** Charles Gray & Jack Miller

**E. T. Gibbons became Pearland's first mayor. Jack Miller the constable and the five councilmen were Victor Nolan, David Smith, Lloyd Hawkins, Tom Alexander and W. E. Parker.**

A giant step in the history of the small town of **Pearland. December 12, 1959**

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**BACK TO THE 70'S**  
**By Linda Eastridge Kinkade**

The year was 1976, and I was eleven years old. **Pearland** was a much smaller town back then. A cute, smart, sweet boy from my school (**Coach Wynn's** History class to be exact) caught my eye. We had only one junior high school in those days. That school is still in use, but now is called **Pearland Junior High East**, and is one of many junior high

schools in **Pearland**. That cute, smart boy held my attention for many months with phone calls and hand written notes (no texting back then). One day, despite the blazing **Texas** summer sun, he even rode his bicycle all the way from his house in **Twin Creek Woods**, off of **Knapp Road** to my house. We lived on **Piper Road**, near the **Manvel Highway**, which at that time was considered “out in the country”. His bicycle tires must have taken a real beating on the hot asphalt of what was then only a two lane **Highway 518** to the oyster shell road that led to my house. Times have changed, 518 is now a multi lane highway and our little shell road is now a paved road with speed bumps!



11 y.o. Brian 1976



11 y.o. Linda 1976

The reason has escaped me, but things didn't work out with the smart little boy from my History class, as most young loves go. We spent the next 6 years with barely a hello in the school hallways. At our high school graduation ceremony, I sat and smiled to myself as he gave the Salutatorian speech, remembering that sweet, determined little 11 year old boy.

The **Pearland High School** class of 1982 scattered like the wind. As fate would have it, on a warm summer evening with the stars perfectly aligned in 2002, I ran into the smart boy from my history class, at our 20 year high school class reunion. Wondering if he would even remember me, I called his name and as he turned around, I put my hand over my name tag and asked, “Do you remember me?” He smiled that same smile I had never forgotten, and said, “Of course I remember you.”

We talked for a long time that evening. He told me about his travels around the world, and how he had ended up living in **New York City**. I had never met anyone who was actually in **Manhattan** on **September 11, 2001**, and listened as he described the horror of that day.

I told him about my life, how I moved to **Houston** as fast as I could when I was very young. Had

eventually married, but was now divorced and had a beautiful 5 year old daughter named **Shelby**.

He had never married. Before I knew it, with the same sweet determination of that boy who rode his bike all those miles in the hot summer sun just to see me, we were on the **Brooklyn Bridge** at sunrise, and he asked me to marry him. Naturally, I accepted and became **Mrs. Brian Kinkade**. He moved back to **Houston**, where we lived in **Bellaire** after having our second daughter, **Sophie**.

After several trips to **Pearland** to visit family, we decided to move back to our little home town. In the 22 years that we had been away from **Pearland**, it had grown into a busy city. Our daughters now walk the same school hallways that we once did. I hear a lot of complaining from some **Pearlanders** about how the town is too big and crowded now. But I like to think of it like you would if you had a best friend since childhood that suddenly became rich and famous. You would be happy for their success, yet still miss the old days when things were simple.



Linda and Brian Kinkade with daughters Shelby (left) and Sophie (top)

Editor's Note: Thanks, **Linda**; and hopefully we will get more memories from the younger old time **Pearlanders**.

With all the talk in the news these days about nationalized healthcare, the following poem seems appropriate, particularly for us older, old time **Pearlanders**.

### *A Final Diagnosis*

*Thought I'd let my doctor check me,  
'Cause I didn't feel quite right. . .*

*All those aches and pains annoyed me  
And I couldn't sleep at night.*

*He could find no real disorder  
But he wouldn't let it rest.  
What with Medicare and Blue Cross,  
We would do a couple tests.*

*To the hospital he sent me  
Though I didn't feel that bad.  
He arranged for them to give me  
Every test that could be had.*

*I was fluoroscoped and cystoscoped,  
My aging frame displayed.  
Stripped, on an ice cold table,  
While my gizzards were x-rayed.*

*I was checked for worms and parasites,  
For fungus and the crud,  
While they pierced me with long needles  
Taking samples of my blood.*

*Doctors came to check me over,  
Probed and pushed and poked around,  
And to make sure I was living  
They then wired me for sound.*

*They have finally concluded,  
Their results have filled a page.  
What I have will someday kill me;  
My affliction is old age.*

Author: Unknown

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**Don't forget the quarterly Historical Society meeting, Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 P.M. at the Knapp Center on Park Street. Cold drinks, coffee and homemade cookies and visitation follow the meeting.**  
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Thought for the day:

*Why do you have to "put your two cents in"... but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? Where's that extra penny going?*