

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor: John D. "Mickey" Mark  
E-mail: [mark325@prodigy.net](mailto:mark325@prodigy.net)

Pearland Historical Society  
P. O. Box 1333  
Pearland, Texas 77588

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

## President's Message:

I hope all of our members had a very **Merry Christmas** and 2012 will be a very, very good year for all. Do you remember back in 2000 when all the alarmists were predicting that **Y2K** would be a disaster for the whole world? All the computers were to stop working, airplanes wouldn't fly, and some people even stocked up with barrels of drinking water and food stuff to last for months. They also stocked up with weapons and plenty of ammunition to ward off those of us who were unprepared. Of course **Y2K** came and nothing changed. Now, guess what? The alarmists are out now warning us that **December 21<sup>st</sup>** of this year will be the end of the world as we know it. They are basing this on the fact that the ancient **Mayan** calendar ends on that date. There is a little more about the **Mayans** further on in the **Newsletter**. They weren't friends of **Mark Belt** nor **Witold von Zychlinski**; but the **Mayan** story is pretty interesting.

The good news is that even if the **Mayans** were correct and the world ends on **December 21<sup>st</sup>**, we will have had another **Historical Society** luncheon; and we would all be talking about what a good time everyone had seeing old friends and classmates. That was the case this past year. Each year, I guess it has something to do with us all getting older, the luncheons seem to get better and better. So mark your calendars for **October 27<sup>th</sup>** and plan now to attend this year's luncheon. We honored the graduating class of 1961 at the last luncheon and had one of the better honored class participants we

ever had. Hopefully we will also get a good turnout from the honored class of 1962 this year.

Don't these years just fly by? Hope to see you at our quarterly meeting, **January 17<sup>th</sup>**.

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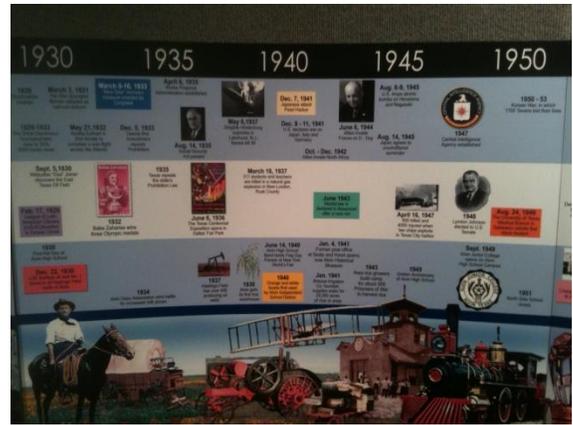
**DON'T FORGET OUR REGULAR QUARTERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING, TUESDAY NIGHT, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE KNAPP CENTER. COOKIES, COFFEE, COLD DRINKS AND VISITATION FOLLOW THE MEETING. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

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## What's Happening

A big "thank you" goes out to everyone who pitched in to make our annual luncheon the success it was. The planning and decorations committee, **Carolyn Garner McCoy, Karen Kliesing and Carleen Mark** did a great job once again with the preparation and decoration; and a large number of volunteers showed up that Saturday morning to help get everything set up. The one thing that didn't quite work out so well was the speaker system. We will try to do better next **October**. A couple of very special people also attended the luncheon this year. They were **Mickey Gray** and sister, **Mary Kathryn**, the children of former **Pearland Superintendent J. D. Gray**.

Recently **Pearland Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Smith** met with **Luther Cunningham** and me to discuss an idea which she wanted to see what the **Historical Society** thought about doing. Her idea was for the **Historical Society** to put up a **Pearland** historical display on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the **Pearland City Hall**. As you exit the elevator on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor there is an area where there are some tables and chairs, a sort of break room I suppose. The wall is 27 feet long. **Luther, Dwight Bittick, Corky Segelquist** and I recently visited the **Alvin Historical Museum** to take a look at a visual time line which **Alvin** had extended around a large part of their museum. We all thought this would be ideal for the 27 foot wall at **City Hall**; and we thought it would be nice to also to have a couple of display cases against the wall below the time line to display historical memorabilia. Below is a picture which **Dwight** took of one very small section of the time line.



**Section of time line at Alvin Museum:** This section is approximately 2 ft. high and 3 ft. long. The challenge we will have is first to determine what all we want to include in the 27 feet of time line we will have on the wall. Also we will have to decide how the sections will be made. The **Alvin Museum** gave me the name of the person in **Texas City** who did their time line but he has not returned a phone call and his e-mail is no longer in service. The website below tells about a program in **Word 2010** for setting up time lines similar to the one above.

<http://www.microsoft.com/education/en-us/teachers/how-to/Pages/creating-timeline.aspx>

I would encourage those of you who are more computer literate than I to visit the website. We really do need help and suggestions on doing the time line. Also **Michelle** has requested we submit an estimate of the cost for the time line and display cases. We will be discussing this further at our meeting **January 17<sup>th</sup>**. We might want to temporarily decorate the walls with old pictures and historical data until the time line is completed. Any suggestions will be welcomed.

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**Society Member Dwight Bittick** once again has once again come up with some very interesting **Pearland** historical information. As most of you are aware, **Dwight** is the person who came up with an item from the **Galveston News** back in 1892 which proved **Mark Belt** was an actual person and not just a railroad term. Now also from an article in the **May 7, 1911** edition of the **Galveston News**, **Dwight** found an interesting story regarding the old fig plant. Below is the story as it appeared in the newspaper.

**CANNING FACTORY**

*Citizens of Pearland Form Stock Company*

*May 6, 1911: Last Thursday night the people of Pearland met and completed the organization of a stock company to be known as the Pearland Canning Company. D. H. Hatfield, Erdman and Sanford were elected as the board directors for the ensuing year. C. R. Richey is president. Dr. W. E. Long, Secretary and G. E. Miller, Treasurer. The will incorporate for \$5000 at once.*

*The plant they propose to put in will occupy a building 20x70 feet, the construction of which is now under way and will can 6000 No. 3 cans or 9000 No. 2 cans of tomatoes in a day of ten hours. They will can all kinds of fruits and vegetables this year of which there is quite an acreage already planted. Mr. Hatfield tells us that next year they expect to run at full capacity and be able to care for 120 acres of tomatoes, besides bean, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, beets, berries, etc. He says*

*they also expect to add a preserver in connection with their cannery to care of the immense acreage of figs which will begin bearing next year.*

*This is the one canning factory that was not promoted for the promoters' benefit, but for the good of the grower and as an aid in developing the fertile country around the little city of Pearland.*



Fig Plant Workers – Picture taken in 1919

**Editor's Note:** Josie Frankenberger Heflin who donated several scrap book full of historical information and who lived on Main Street where the historic oak tree now stands, once commented that the building of the fig plant was the greatest thing that ever happened to Pearland. Josie went on to say that getting gas and electricity in the 1920's was a close second.

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As mentioned above when **Josie Frankenberger Heflin** passed away several years ago she left to the **Historical Society** six big scrapbooks of information she had accumulated through the years. It is always interesting to go through one of the books and read the articles she saved. Recently I found an article from the **October 12, 1958 Sunday** edition of the **Houston Post** which **Josie** had clipped out and saved. It was a story about the beer drinking buffalo and five legged steer that **Mr. J. B. Choate** kept outside of his business in **Hastings** called "**The Country Store.**" As you will recall we had a story and pictures also in an issue of the **Newsletter** last year. The story in the **Post**

mentioned a few things we didn't have in our story. The **Post** story stated that **Mr. Choate** also had a **Mexican eagle**, several **Mexican hogs or javelinas**, a **pair of monkeys** and a **stuffed snake**. In discussing the snake, **Mr. Choate** said, "*I bought that snake at the **Buckhorn Saloon** in **San Antonio**. Actually it is a **boa constrictor**; but everybody who came along called that thing a **rattlesnake**. Now they ought to know that **rattlesnakes** don't grow that long but I got tired of arguing and explaining about that snake so I nailed some rattlers on him and now everybody's happy when they see a 17 foot rattler.*"

Just a little more about an interesting spot in the history of our area. Some of our readers had mentioned the other animals **Mr. Choate** had along with the beer drinker and the five legger. Does anyone remember the 17 ft. rattlesnake?

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**Among our Members**

**Society Member JoAnn Suttle Mark**, down in **Victoria, Texas** is going through some painful times after falling and fracturing her tailbone awhile back. Please keep **JoAnn and Roy** in your prayers.

Long time **Pearlander** and **Historical Society** member **Dorothy Long Cook** passed away **October 23<sup>rd</sup>**. **Dorothy** was a charter member of the **Pearland Historical Society**, and was **City Secretary** for many years. She was also a **Pearland** historian having written several **Pearland** history stories. She contributed a lot to **Pearland** and will be greatly missed. Our sympathies go out to all the **Long and Cook** families.



**Dorothy Cook & Lola Mae Long** at **Reunion Luncheon** sometime back.

At the **Pearland City Council** meeting in **April, 1973**, then **Mayor Carlton McComb** read a proclamation proclaiming the week of **April 23<sup>rd</sup>** as **Dorothy L. Cook Week**. On **Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**, **Dorothy** had served as **City Secretary** for five years. **Mayor McComb** asked that all citizens of **Pearland** take notice of the **Dorothy L. Cook** week. A reception honoring **Dorothy** was held following the council meeting - - - all of which came as a surprise to her.

Long time Pearland resident **Ray Ferguson** died **November 9th**. **Ray** was the older son of **Dr. Lloyd Ferguson** and **Rosalie Ferguson**. **Rosalie**, who wrote and published the book "**A History of Pearland, Texas**" back in 1993 passed away in November, 2010. Our sympathies go out to **Dr. Ferguson** and all the **Ferguson** family.

Long time **Pearlander, Wanda Harris**, passed away **November 13th**. Many of you remember that **Wanda** was the widow of **Escue Harris** and remember a time when **Escue** was the "maintenance department" for the **Pearland Water & Sewer District**. Our sympathies go out to daughter **Sandra**, who was her Mother's caregiver and to all the family.

Former **Pearlander** and 1951 **Pearland High School** graduate, **Sallie Saffle Dimmitt** passed away **Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>** in **San Antonio**. **Sallie** was married to **Grant Dimmitt**, 1944 PHS grad. Many of you will remember the **Saffle** family in **Pearland**. The family lived in a home in **South Park Cemetery** where **Mr. Saffle** was the superintendent. Many also will remember **Mrs. Saffle**, along with **Nina Hill** and **Bobbie Martin**, serving up the good hamburgers at the old drugstore on the corner of 35 and 518. **Sallie and Grant** spent most of their married life in **Idaho and Colorado**. She was preceded in death by sister **Mary Jo Saffle Olin** and brother **John Saffle**.

**Grace Elliott, Mother of Lonnie Elliott, Mother-in-law of Society Member Suzanne O'Day Elliott** passed away December 5th.

**Betty Halik Todd**, a 1960 graduate of **PHS** passed away **December 11<sup>th</sup>** after a long battle with rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes. **Betty** was the

sister of **Warren Halik** and cousin to **Carl and Wesley Halik, Kenneth and Russell Knapp** and to **Marian Knapp Mathews**. Her husband, **Steve Todd**, is retired from the **Air Force**. Our sympathies go out to all of **Betty's** family.

Long time **Pearland Elementary** teacher, **Nancy Green**, passed away **Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>**. **Nancy** was the **Mother of Historical Society** member **Debbie Green**. She is also survived by her son, **Danny Green**, who is a former teacher and coach in **Pearland** before his long tenure as track coach at the **Woodlands**. Also **Danny** has a place in history as the person who won the very first **Houston** marathon in 1972. **Nancy** will certainly be missed and fondly remembered by her many former students.

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**AND NOW FOR SOME GOOD NEWS !!!!!**

**Society Member David Scott** turns 92 on **Jan.16<sup>th</sup>**. **Happy birthday, David**. As we all are aware **David** is the oldest native born **Pearland** citizen. Up until **Emma Wells** passed away last **July** at the age of 97, we all knew **Emma** was the oldest native born female citizen and also the oldest citizen male or female. Now who is the oldest native born female resident and has **David** become the oldest native born? Please let us know if you have a nominee?



**Happy Birthday, David !!**

Congratulations go out to **Society members Carl and Jennie Talbot** on the birth of their 2nd great-grandson, **Trent Michael Ingrando**. **Trent** arrived **December 21<sup>st</sup>** checking in at 8 lbs., one oz. and was 20 and one half inches long with blonde hair. It was a special **Christmas for Carl and Jennie**.

**Autumn Taylor, Pearland High School** junior, daughter of **Society Member Sharyl Riggs Taylor** and granddaughter of **Historical Society Secretary, Brenda Martin Riggs** made **All-District 24-5A 1<sup>st</sup>** team in **Volleyball** playing for the **Pearland Oilers**. This was **Autumn's** 3<sup>rd</sup> straight year to be picked on the all-district first team. As a side note, **Autumn** is a 6<sup>th</sup> generation **Pearland Martin**



**Autumn Taylor, 3 Times All-district**

Congratulations go out to **Wanda and Quinton Jamison** who celebrated 61 years of marriage on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Both **Wanda and Quinton** have been going through a lot of physical problems.



**Wanda & Quinton at Zychlinski Park Dedication**

**Wanda** is still recuperating from surgery to totally remove her kneecap back in mid **November**. Also **Quinton** spent some time in the hospital with stomach pains in late **November**. **Quinton** did go deer hunting this year and got an 8 point buck. Can't remember the exact number but seems as if

**Wanda** said it was **Quinton's** 60<sup>th</sup> year or so of deer hunting on the same lease. **WOW!!!**

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At our annual reunion luncheon in October we will be honoring the PHS graduating class of 1962. Below are Class of 1962 members

as listed in the Silver Anniversary Pearland yearbook:

*Claire Lynn Arnold, Judy Benes, Harriett Borden, Joan Bennett, Mary Castro, Josephine Corpus, Mary Kaminsky, Terry Faul, Linda Fisher, Hector Garcie, Mary Gomez, Patsy Gonzales, Terry Gray, Donna Grigar, Bill Harris, Cheryl Hawkins, Douglas Holmes, John Jamison, Margie Keilers, Eddie Keonitzer, Beth Knight, Morris Kyser, Ida Long, Jessica Lopez, Larry Louden, Roy "Buddy" Martin, Jeanie Matlock, Jerry McWhirter, Carolyn Oliver, Kent Opel, Carolyn Palmer, Linda Parker, Daniel Pina, Bill Poston, Delores Raney, Cruz Robles, Judy Rowe, Joe David Saffle, Rachal Scott, Sue Schriewer, Sylvia Schriewer, Patricia Tilson, Betsy Warren, Johnny Walther, Gloria Jean Cook, Henry Whitt, Lester Williams.*

If you know an address of any of the above, please send an e-mail to let us know. We will send self addressed stamped invitations to each member later in the year. We know **Buddy Martin** and **Judy Rowe** have passed away. Are there others?

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**1956, A Year to Remember in Pearland Basketball.**

In the last issue of the **Newsletter** we had a story from **Brenda Martin Riggs** about **Coach Buck Brooks**; and several of our readers sent articles of their remembrance of **Coach Brooks**. The majority of the remembrances were basically about basketball which most of us feel was **Coach Brooks** first love in sports. Most of us who played basketball under **Coach Brooks** have a story to tell; and we all recall the old gymnasium being open 24 hours a day for anyone who wanted to stop in and play basketball.

In looking back at that era of basketball there is one story about **Pearland Oiler** basketball which has

been mostly overlooked. It was one of the most historic dates in **Pearland** sports history. It was the year 1956 and the year **Pearland** made it to the state tournament in **Austin**. No, it was not the **Pearland Oilers** coached by **Buck Brooks**. It was the **Pearland girls basketball team** coached by **Mrs. Florine Little**. **Mrs. Little** came to **Pearland** in the fall of 1947 as the **Home Economics** teacher; and I believe it was **Pearland's** first year to have girls' volleyball, which she coached. I am not sure what year girls basketball was started at **PHS** but **Mrs. Little** was the first coach.

A good number of our **Historical Society** members were on that 1956 team. Among them are **Pat Lane Flanakin, Sandy Martin Scott, Martha Thurman Ellis, Brenda Martin Riggs, Glenda Fay Martin Garner, Dana Hastings Triplett, and Marian Knapp Mathews**. **Mary Mahanay Ashmore** was the team manager. If you remember back in 1956 girls basketball teams still had 6 players on each team – 3 guards and 3 forwards and the court was divided in two halves and with the exception of one guard who was designated the roving guard, guards could not cross the center line and forwards could not cross the other way. I may not remember exactly the starting lineup; but I do remember quite a lot about that season. As best I remember the guards were **Sally West, Martha Thurman, and Sara Jane Parker**. Forwards were **Pat Lane, Melba Stephens and Clara Gonzales**. **Pat Lane** was a tremendous outside shooter consistently hitting what would today be 3 pointers. **Melba Stephens** was considered tall for those days and was a good rebounder. **Clara Gonzales** was very fast and also a good outside shot. On defense **Martha Thurman** was a take charge player and great rebounder. **Sally West and Sara Jane** were very quick and good ball handlers. There were others who could contribute when in the game. Remember also that back in 1956 to make it to the state tournament a team had to win the district championship, bi-district and then win the regional tournament. Today the first four teams in the district go to regional playoffs. The 56 team went undefeated in the district, beat **Crescent in the bi-district game 70 – 56, and then beat Big Sandy 42 -26, Orangefield 40 -32 and North Zulch 52 - 46** to advance to the state tournament. Also keep in

mind that in 1956 there were only three classifications in **Texas High School** sports – AA, A, and B. **Pearland** was class B.

A lot of **Pearland** fans were at **Austin** hoping for a state championship. Unfortunately in the opening game **Pearland** came up against a very, very tall team from **Hawley**, a small town in **West Texas** between **Abilene and Lubbock**. The **Pearland** girls put up a great fight but couldn't quite compete with the much taller **Hawley** girls. When we think about **Pearland** basketball, the team of 1956 should be long remembered as the first **Pearland** team to make the state tournament - - something you don't hear much about. I am not sure how long **Mrs. Little** taught and coached in **Pearland** nor the year she left. Her name comes up very often when former students get together and discuss teachers who have influenced their lives. **Mrs. Little** now lives in **Lovelady, Texas**. Her name is in the history books of **Pearland** athletics as the first coach to take a team to the state.



**1956 Pearland Girl's Basketball Champs**  
 1<sup>st</sup> row L/R: **Dana Hastings, Clara Gonzales, Sara Jane Parker, Sandy Martin, Shary Davis, Pat Cook**  
 2<sup>nd</sup>: **Marilyn Howard, Pat Lane, Melba Stephens, Brenda Martin, Sally West**  
 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Mrs. Little, Marian Knapp, Darla K. Davis, Carolyn Howard, Glenda Carpenter, Lillie Duvall, Glenda Martin, and Mary Mahanay (Mgr)**

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 The information for the story above came from the **1956 PHS Yearbook** which was loaned to me from **1956 graduate, Armilda Nichols Hall**. Isn't it fun to look back and reminisce about those high school years. Sometimes it is a bit sad when you see

pictures of teachers and students who are no longer with us. From an historical point of view, it really is astounding to look at **PHS** in 1956 and realize what the **Pearland** school district is today. In 1956 there were twenty eight seniors, which I suspect was the largest graduating class up until that time. There were 132 students in the whole high school. There were twenty seven teachers for grades one through twelve. It is hard to visualize that today when you see yellow school buses backed up for what seems like miles on 518.

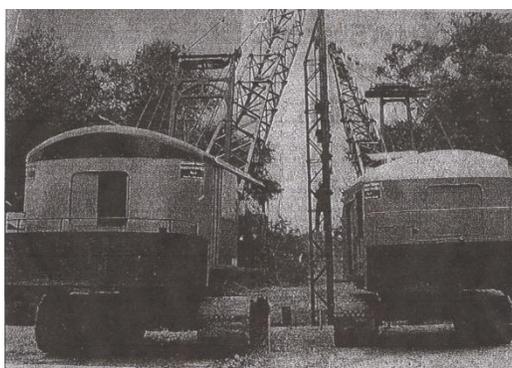
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### A LITTLE MORE HISTORY

From time to time we receive some interesting messages from persons who visit our website – [www.pearlandhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.pearlandhistoricalsociety.org) Recently someone sent the following message:

*"Do you have any information about how Independence Park came into existence? Or how it was named? The Pearland Parks department does not have records about this ."*

There was no information in our **Historical Society** files so the question was sent out in an e-mail to those on the **Historical Society** e-mail list. **Society Member Kathy DeWillis Wells** did come up with quite a bit of information from the **Drainage District #4** past files. Minutes from a meeting on **February 1976** show a bid request for creosote lumber for the bridge into the park being awarded to **Pearland Lumber**. The picture below is of two draglines with caption describing the beginning of the bridge construction to be dedicated on **July 4, 1976**



### Draglines at Independence Park – 1976

**Kathy** reported also that **Drainage District Superintendent Mike Yost** talked with his Father, **John “Bootsie” Yost** who remembers stories told by his grandfather, ( **Christ Yost**) who was an original owner of 138 acres bordering 138 acres owned by a **Mr. Will Hansen of Kansas**. With the construction of 518, **Yost** and **Hansen** traded 12 acres of land with the **Yosts** receiving 12 acres of land where the Park is now located. The **Wellborn family of Alvin** sold the City another 50 acres adjacent to the 12 bought from **Lloyd Yost**. **Lloyd Yost** later acquired the land; and the City then acquired it from **Lloyd**. Thanks, **Kathy**, for the info.

Since the Park was opened on July 4, 1976 you would assume that is where the name **“Independence Park”** originated. However, **Jack McGuff**, remembers his Mother winning a contest to name the park. Perhaps **Mrs. McGuff** suggested the name **“Independence Park”** because it was opening 200 years after the **Declaration of Independence** and the City then decided to have the opening dedication ceremony on the **4<sup>th</sup> of July**. Then **U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen** was on hand for the opening dedication.

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### A Bit More About the Mayans

A story about the **Mayans** doesn’t have anything to do with **Pearland** history, except that if the **Mayan** prediction comes true **Pearland** (as well as the whole world) will be history. Who were the **Mayans**? The following information taken from a website about the **Mayans**.

*“The Mayans lived in North and Central America – from present day Mexico to Guatemala. Around 900 A.D. the Mayan civilization disappeared without a trace over a thousand years ago. The Mayans were able to accurately predict every solar eclipse for the last thousand years to the second – their Mayan calendar is called the most accurate time keeping system ever created by man... Mayans were the most advanced civilization indigenous to the Americas. Their astronomy and mathematics are unsurpassed in the world during their time. Their Long Count Calendar really is the most advanced ever created.*

*Where did the Mayans go? Their cities were abandoned and left empty – to rot and decay, to be reclaimed by the jungle. Where did the Mayans go? Were they killed by disease or war or something even worse? The answer is that we simply do not know what happened to the ancient Maya. There are people living now who call themselves Mayan, but no one can say for sure if they are related to the ancient Maya or just neighboring civilizations. What we do know is that the ancient Mayan cities were abandoned and left to be reclaimed by the jungle*

*Some say that the Mayans were killed off by disease and that this chased any possible survivors out of the cities... but forever? Some say that the Maya were killed off by war and conquest... but then why the magnificent uninhabited cities? And then some... well, some say that the Mayans received their advanced society by an advanced race (either from another planet or another dimension) and that this is where the Maya have gone and also where they may return from at the end of the Long Count Calendar.*

### **What are the Mayan prophecies for 2012?**

*This is the true question. The Mayan calendar ends on December 21st 2012 – but why are so many people afraid of this date? What is the big deal? There are essentially 3 camps:*

*1. The end of the Mayan calendar means either the end of the earth or doom for the human race. The level of cataclysm depends on the person, but the idea is that the end of the Mayan calendar is a bad thing. The ideas used to support this theory are wide and wild – everything from Nostradamus predictions to the NASA solar maximum warning. Recent credence includes the increasing instances of natural disasters.*

*2. The end of the Mayan calendar means birth and renewal. There will not necessarily be any kind of “event” – cataclysmic or otherwise. There will just be a new age for mankind and the earth. The Mayan writings seem to support this theory the most. There have been previous ages according to Mayan mythology and there is to be a fifth age beginning at dawn on December 22nd 2012.*

*3. The end of the Mayan calendar means absolutely nothing. This is the belief of the ignorant and the apathetic. The fact that the Mayan calendar means at least a new age is clear. Reaching the end of the 5126 Mayan calendar is an enormous event in the history of mankind and should be celebrated.*

So there you have it. What do you think? I think we all need to come to the **Reunion Luncheon** on **October 27<sup>th</sup>** just in case.

**Just a reminder. Membership dues are due for the year 2012. Please see the form attached to submit your yearly dues of \$15 per member. Please note if you paid your dues in the last 3 months of 2011 you are paid up through the end of 2012. Thanks.**

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### **CHARITY**

**There is so much good in the worst of us,  
and so much bad in the best of us.**

**That it ill behooves any of us.**

**To find fault with the rest of us.**

**Author: Unknown**

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**Don't forget the quarterly meeting  
Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. at the  
Knapp Center. Hope to see you there.**

