

PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor: John D. "Mickey" Mark
E-mail: 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

Our Wednesday work nights are always interesting and a lot of fun. We get a little bit of work done most nights; but what is really fun is looking through all the memorabilia which has been given to our **Society**. Of particular interest are the big scrap books which **Josie Frankenberger Heflin** put together during her life in **Pearland**. **Josie** was born in **1898** and was **100** years old before going into a nursing home in **McKinney, Texas** where she died at the age of **102**. What **Josie's** scrapbooks really illustrate to us is that what is happening today will be of great interest to the next generation and thereafter.

Several of our members have recorded stories of growing up in **Pearland** and also a lot of family histories. I would encourage each of our members to think back to your earlier days in **Pearland** and to write about those memories. One thing most everyone who writes about old time **Pearland** mentions is the old corner drugstore run by **Louella and Albert "Smitty" Smith**. Some reminisce about the great 10 cent hamburgers and malts they had for lunch there. Others like to talk about just hanging out there on the corner and watching the cars passing through what was then the center of **Pearland**.

We have been writing the **Newsletter** for over 20 years and have every copy on file. There are some great historical stories which have been submitted by various members. They will all eventually be in

our **Historical Museum**. As we lose more and more of our "old timers" I urge each of you to think back to your earlier days and write a story. Your children and grandchildren will enjoy them.

Mickey Mark

What's Happening?

As most of you are aware, the **Pearland City Recreation Center** is no longer available for our annual **Reunion Luncheons**. Thanks to the **Pearland Independent School District** and to **Keith Ordeneaux, Facility and Energy Rental Manager** for the school district, our luncheon this **October** will be at the **PISD Administration Building on North Main St.** (This is the old **Wal-Mart** building). We will be in the "**Board Room**" which has the capacity to handle over 300 persons for a luncheon. **Peggy Long, Luther Cunningham** and I were given a tour of the facility by **Keith**; and we were quite impressed with the room and with all the amenities (restrooms, speakers, video, etc.). Also parking will be more than adequate on a **Saturday**.

The **Wednesday** night group continues to meet and work on a weekly basis. Progress is slow but steady. The two display cases which the **Lion's Club** is donating to us are still a go. Also a little further in the **Newsletter** you will see a uniform from the **Pearland** ladies softball team of the 40's

on a mannequin which was donated to us from **Dillard's** (thanks to **Karen Corron**).

At our last meeting we voted to return to an every three months schedule for our meetings. Our next meeting will be **April 16th** at our site on **Galveston Ave.**

A project still ongoing is the creation of a **Pearland** history DVD disc to present to all of the **Pearland** schools. We are working with the City of **Pearland** to create a pictorial history of **Pearland**; and also a young man by the name of **Rahul Popat** is working with us also to create another **Pearland** history disc. This is **Rahul's** project to become an **Eagle Scout**. A third possibility is the updating of the video "**The Heart of Pearland**" which **Susan Smith Lenamon** put together a number of years ago. This is about a 33 minute video featuring interviews with **Pearland** old timers along with history information. At the time this video was made we hadn't found the real story about "**Mark Belt**" nor about **Witold von Zychlinski**.

AMONG OUR MEMBERS

As we all age, it seems that with each **Newsletter** we have more and more sad news. This one is no exception.

Pearland Historical Society member **Herbert Jamison** passed away **March 6th** at **Windsong Nursing Home in Pearland** where he had been for the last 18 months or so. **Herbert** was **94** years old. He was the 10th of 12 **Jamison** children of **Bert and Martha Jamison** who came to **Pearland** around **1901**. Of the 12 children surviving are older brother **Allen** and younger sister **Society Member Florence Jamison Gum (youngest Jamison)**. Our sympathies go out to members of **Herbert's** family and to all the **Jamisons**. The **Jamison** family contributed greatly to the history of **Pearland**. He will certainly be missed. **Herbert** enjoyed our **Reunion Luncheons**.



Herbert Jamison at a Reunion Luncheon Society Member David Smith, fell March 5th and broke his ankle and tibia and also sustained a cut on his arm which required 18 stitches. **David** was taken to **Southeast Memorial Hospital** where he had surgery to repair the damages. After two weeks in **Southeast, David** was transferred to **Kindred Care in Clear Lake** where he is at this time.

Throughout the years, **David** has worked to improve life in our **City**. In the early years of the **Pearland EMS, David** and wife **Frankie** were on just about every run made by the **EMS**. Please keep **David** and family in your prayers.



David Smith leading prayer at Luncheon Luther Cunningham next to David

Society member Barbara Christofferson Maynor, fell March 24th and broke 3 ribs. After a couple of days in **Southeast Memorial Hospital, Barbara** was transferred to **Windsong Nursing**

Home in Pearland. Please keep **Barbara** and family in your prayers.

Society Member Bill Cook, long time **Pearlander** who retired from **Pearland Lumber Ace Hardware**, had gall bladder surgery **Feb. 16**. Good to report **Bill** has recuperated rapidly and is doing very good. Way to go, **Bill**.

Society Member and **Pearland's** oldest native born citizen, **David Scott**, is currently in the hospital at **Southeast Memorial**. **David** is going through a very rough time and has been diagnosed with pneumonia. **David**, who is a very active 95 year old, is known by many as "**Mr. Pearland**". He is in our history as the person who scored the first touchdown ever for the **Pearland Oilers** in the **Oilers** initial season of **1937** in their game against **LaMarque**. Keep **David** in your prayers.



David Scott

Historical Society member **Sidney Kliesing** is also currently in **Southeast Memorial Hospital** after having an accident on his motorcycle on **April 4th**. **Sid** suffered a fractured hip and a broken collar bone in the wreck. Last report from the family was **Sid** was resting comfortably. Those of us who have known **Sidney** for a very long time know he will be doing his best to be out and around just as quickly as possible. **He, Reba, and family** will be in our prayers.



Sidney & Reba Kliesing

Sadly we have also lost several long time **Pearlanders** over the last 3 months. Long time **Pearlander Bill Crocker** passed away **Jan. 26th**. **Bill**, who was one of the regulars for morning coffee at the **What-a-burger** holds a place in the history of **Pearland**. **Bill** was the last **Pearland** railroad station agent before the station was closed.

1955 PHS graduate, Bob Mack Furnace, passed away in his sleep **Feb. 10th**. **Bob Mack** was a **1955 PHS graduate**. **Bob Mack** and brothers were regular attendees at our annual **Historical Society Reunion**

Darlene Griffin Woods passed away **Feb. 13th** after a very long and very courageous battle with cancer. **Darlene** was the daughter of **Pete and Audrey Griffin**. The **Griffin** family is one of the long time **Pearland** families. I believe the **Griffin** family came to **Pearland** in the **20's**. Our deepest sympathies go out to **Darlene's** family.

Another long time **Pearlander** who passed away around **Feb. 13th** was **Judy Swensen**. **Judy** was the widow of **1939 PHS graduate, Richard Swensen**.

Sara Jane Parker Osbon passed away **March 8th**. Although **Sarah Jane** and husband **Jerry** lived in **Alvin**, most everyone considered **Sarah Jane** a **Pearlander**. Many of you will remember that **Sara Jane** was a **1957 P.H.S.** graduate, with sisters **Florence Ann, class of 1955** and **Linda Sue, class of 1962**. Please keep **Jerry** and family in your prayers

Margaret “Maggie” Gonzales Coffey passed away **Easter Sunday** morning. She will be remembered by many old time **Pearlanders** as the gracious hostess at local restaurants including the one she owned and ran for a period of time called “**Maggie’s Wok.**” As a hostess she always met customers at the door with a very warm smiling welcome. Sympathies go out to all the **Gonzales** family, one of the long time **Pearland** families.

Long time **Pearlander, Joe Dalmolin,** is now in **Windsong Nursing Home** after suffering a heart attack on **Feb. 7th.** His daughter, **Carol,** said he went into **Windsong** on **Feb. 16th** and has had pneumonia and has been in rehab there. **Carol** says **Joe** is allowed visitors; but said the best time to visit is in the mornings. **Joe** is **91** years old. Some of you who remember the **Pearland** men's softball team after **WWII** will also remember **Joe** was a member of that team. Please keep **Joe** and his family in your prayers.

Former **Pearlander Joe David Saffle,** had quadruple bi-pass **March 12th** at **St Joseph Hospital in Bryan, TX.** He had already had numerous stints placed previously.

Joe David graduated from **Pearland High** in the early '60's. He is married to **Gail Rainey Saffle,** who is the youngest of the **Pearland Raney** family. Unfortunately **Gail** also fell and cracked her pelvis. **Joe David** is a retired **Baptist Pastor** and helped form the **Shadycrest Baptist Church** among many other things. They are now living near **Huntsville.**

Society Member Pat Smjastrla reports that husband, **Anton,** better known to most of us as “**Coach Tony**” has been going through a rough time. **Tony** spent about a week in the hospital with pneumonia and other problems. Many of our members have some great memories of **Tony’s** coaching when they were in **Jr. High.** Keep **Tony, Pat** and family in your prayers

CLASS OF 1965

Thanks to 1965 class member **Michalyn Miller Ordeneaux** for providing names, addresses and in many instances e-mail addresses for class of 65 members. We will be mailing out luncheon invitations to class members in early **June.** We also will be sending stamped, self addressed envelopes for the return of the invitations. We still need quite a few addresses. Following is a list of names for which **Michalyn** did not have addresses. If you know the address for anyone on this list, please e-mail it to **mark325@prodigy.net**

Vivian Armstrong; Billy Basket; Beth Benedict; Cheryl Black; Travis Black; Cynthia Bryan; Frank Cannon; Talmage Colson; Fay Frolick, Vera Guice; Presley Hood; Martin Matocha; Donald McDaniel; Arleen Miller; Mike Morgan; Quida Parker; Estella Ramirez; Billy Sanders; Lynda Shannon; and James Smith.

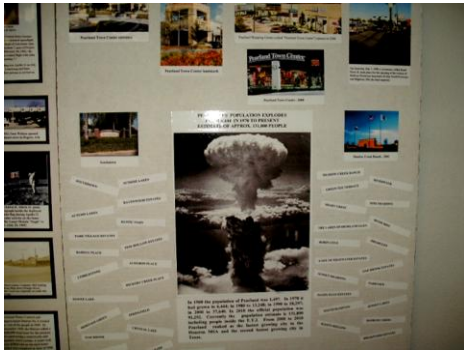
Deceased members of the class of 65 are as follows:

Larry Fisher; Dean Haskins; Sharon McBride Honeycutt; Bill Kliesing; William Payne; Hughie Raney; Kenneth Schmith; Gerald Thompson; Harry Thompson; and Marilyn Bowers.

We will be lighting one large candle at our memorial candle lighting ceremony for the deceased members.

A FEW INTERESTING QUESTIONS

Recently a **Cub Scout** troop along with some parents met at our **Historical Society** home to hear a presentation of **Pearland** history. We gave about a 15 minute historical presentation and then discussed the historical timeline poster by poster, decade by decade.



he instructed one of his sidekicks to plant the beautiful flowering pear trees everywhere to attract buyers and then named the town **“Pear Land”**. (And the original plat did say **“Pear Land”** – two words). Once again after the presentation we had a question/answer session with some very good questions. One little boy had this interesting question. *“Where did that man get all the seeds he needed to plant the trees?”*

My favorite question from all the presentations came from a young man at **C. J. Harris Elementary School** several years ago before **C. J. Harris** moved to **Barry Rose Road**. At the presentation the students were shown a slide show of the old 35mm slides depicting life in the very early days of **Pearland**. In the question answer series, we had some very good questions indicating the students had a sincere interest in **Pearland** history. When the students had run out of questions, one young man raised his hand and said “I have a question.” When asked what his question was, he replied, *“how old are you anyway.?”*

So now before any presentations to groups such as **Cub Scouts** and elementary age students, I always present a disclaimer before starting the presentation saying *“I did not personally take these pictures.”*

As mentioned previously, one of the items in our memorabilia is a softball uniform worn by **Ida Nichols** on the Pearland ladies softball team back in the **40’s**. Also as mentioned, thanks to **Karen Corron, Dillard’s** donated a mannequin to put the uniform on; so we can now see what the ladies of the **40’s** looked like on the softball diamond. The park where both men and women played softball was almost exactly where our **Historical Society** home is now. Back in the **40’s** softball was a big deal in **Pearland** – both men and women’s. A large number of **Pearlanders** would turn out for the

As most are aware, the last poster shows the population of **Pearland** exploding with new subdivision names scattered amongst a picture of an atomic bomb explosion. Below are pictures of the poster with a close up of the exploding bomb. After the presentation, we started a question/answer period. The **Cub Scouts** had a few relevant questions. The fathers present had questions about **Mark Belt and Zychlinski**. The mothers mostly had questions about **Josie’s** hand sewn blouse she did at the age of 17. Then one little cub had this very interesting question, which was: *“How many people got killed in that big explosion?”*



At another presentation made to a group of 2nd graders at one of the grammar schools on the west side of **Pearland** we discussed how **Pearland** got the name **“Pear Land”**. We talked about how when **Witold von Zychlinski** was platting the land



Ladies Softball Uniform worn by Ida Nichols

As best I can remember the **Pearland** ladies were not in a league; but the competition was fierce. Some of the teams played were **Alvin, Seabrook, South Houston** and I believe **Hastings** also had a team. Two of our **Historical Society** members, **Barbara Christofferson Maynor** and **Delores Long Stevenson**, played on the team and can possibly give us more information. **Ernie Long** managed the team. Most of the balls and strikes umpiring was done by **Robert Palmer** whose wife, **Jessie Palmer** and daughter **Wanda Palmer** played on the team. In spite of having a wife and daughter playing for **Pearland, Mr. Palmer**, who had played minor league baseball, called them just like he saw them; and I suspect **Mrs. Palmer** and **Wanda** may have given **Robert** more than a little grief at home about some of the calls. I do know that those of us who played with the men's softball team never umpired more than once. As mentioned before the ladies were fierce competitors. We may have missed some names of the ladies who played. Let us know if there were others we left out.



As you can see **Ida's** uniform says "Skipper's Inn – Dancing" **Skippers Inn** was a dance hall/beer

joint on **South Main street**. I believe it is the same building now used by **Tires to Go – Pearland**.

Pictured below is a group of ladies who had at one time played for the **Pearland** softball team. This picture was taken at a reunion. The date is unknown.



Lto R: **Ida Nichols** (Shortstop); **Bessie Collins** (Pitcher); **Bea Theriot** (Center Field) **Hatti Wood** (Catcher); **Virgil Hawk** (Right Field); **Jessie Palmer** (1st Base); **Wanda Palmer Nichols** (2nd Base); **Delores Long Stevenson** (Left Field) and **Betty Jane Cook Beauchamp** (3rd Base)

As you can see in the picture **Ida Nichols** and **Jessie Palmer** are wearing the **Pearland** uniforms. **Ida** was very proud that she could still wear the uniform (the one in our Museum). Each uniform had the name of a different **Pearland** business on the back.



Refreshment stand at softball field. Front row L.R. is **Fay Beck, Maureen Mahanay, Nelda Bristow** and **Leo Parker**. Behind the counter from L.to R. are **Allie Mae Cook, Gladys Garner, Mrs. J.D. Gray, Gladys Beck, man with hat unknown, Ernest Martin**.

A Little More About Early Pearland Ball Games

Looking back at interviews with old time **Pearlanders** such as **Lois Hunter Bundy** and **Emma Coppinger** whenever they were asked what the folks in **Pearland** did for entertainment back in those early days, one of their answers was they looked forward to the town team baseball games at what is now **Zychlinski Park**. So some type of baseball or softball has been going on in **Pearland** since the very early days of our history. Among our memorabilia at our **Historical Society** home is the following picture of one of the early **Pearland** town teams all decked out in their “**Suburban Gardens**” uniforms. The picture is date **1910**.



Top Row L/R: Bill McKee, Lester Livesay, Dutch Mallard, Clinton Cunningham, Otis Bales, Walter Keehn, Ernest Pemberton.

Bottom Row: L/R: Bob Schmitz, Johnny Nightengale, Luther Cunningham, Lucron Cormant.

The **Luther Cunningham** pictured in the bottom row is the father of **Luther Cunningham, 1st V.P.** of the **Historical Society**.

Baseball quite probably will be in the discussions of the class of 65 at the **Historical Society Luncheon**. Several members of that class were on the first teams to play **Little League** baseball in **Pearland**; and the games were played at what is now

Zychlinski Park. The first year was **1957** when most of the boys were probably 10 years old. We had 44 boys playing with 4 teams of 11 boys each ages 9 through 12. We started playing as soon as school was out for the summer and played through most of the summer. The **Lions Club** gave us \$100 to buy equipment and jerseys and local merchants also donated to help with expenses. Umpires were voluntary. Before the days of I-Pads, Apps and actually not that much TV, baseball was the big attraction of the summer. Today the baseball complex out on **Fite Road** has ball fields in every direction and hundreds of players. Times have certainly changed.

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.

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Looking Ahead

In the opening message of this **Newsletter**, we discussed the importance of putting our memories in writing (or in this day and age on CD's or something similar). Wouldn't it be interesting to see our time capsule being opened in **2057**. Among the memorabilia in the capsule are predictions for the future which some of us put in the capsule. When we now look back to **1965**, we have to wonder what would have been the predictions for a time capsule to be opened in **2015**. As the class members of **65** reminisce about their early years in **Pearland** you wonder how many would have predicted the way **Pearland** is today. When the class of **65** graduated, they had about **73 graduates** from the only high school in **Pearland**. Today we have three high schools and probably 1700 or 1800 graduates. Do you think anyone back in **1965** would have made that prediction for the time capsule to be opened in **2015**?



This picture is of Marguerite Massey Smith with General William Willoughby at the dedication of the Texas Historical Marker at Zychlinsky Park in 2007. Marguerite is a great example of someone who recorded Pearland history which will be appreciated through time.

If we opened our time capsule today we would probably find that a lot of the predictions for **2057** have already made big changes since **2007** when the capsule was closed. The first question on the prediction sheet read as follows: *The current population of Pearland is approx. 80,000 persons. What do you predict the population in 2057 will be?* In just 7-1/2 years the population has grown to around **107,000** inside the city limits.

Another question on the list is *“What will be the biggest problem facing Pearland citizens in 2057 – A. Crime B. Environment C. Rapid Growth D. Drainage”* This is a question about a problem which hasn’t changed much over the years. **Either Mrs. Coppinger or “Grandma Hunter”** wrote about the first town meeting ever held in **Pearland** ending in a fist fight over drainage issues. So we could suspect drainage may not be the biggest problem in **2057** but probably will still be a problem.

Also a question on the list is *“What will be the price of a hamburger at McDonald’s in 2057?”* This is a subject we often hear about from our members - - the ten cent hamburgers we used to

enjoy at the old corner drugstore back in the **40’s** and early **50’s**. What do you think the prediction would have been at that time as for the price of a hamburger in **2057?**

Just a few thoughts about why we need to put some of our thoughts and memories in writing.

“He who laughs last thinks slowest.”

“A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.”

“When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.”

Just a reminder. Historical Society yearly membership dues became due on January 1st.

Please see the membership form at the end of the Newsletter.

Don’t forget our quarterly Historical Society Meeting Thursday night, April 16th at 7:00 P.M. at our Historical Society home on Galveston Ave. As usual homemade cookies, coffee and cold drinks and visitation follow the meeting. See you there.

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 2015. Is this a gift membership?

Yes _____ No _____

Cash Payment \$ _____

Name _____ Name _____

Mailing address _____

e-mail address _____

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____
