

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

In previous issues of the Newsletter we have encouraged members to write stories about earlier days in **Pearland**.

Thanks to **Brenda Martin Riggs and Diane Kliesing Day** there are two remembrances in this issue of the **Newsletter**. **Brenda's** story is about the life of her **uncle Lyle Martin**; and **Diane's** is a short story about the **Kliesing** family. Anytime old timers get together and start discussing the early years of **Pearland the Martin and Kliesing** names always come up. Thanks, **Brenda and Diane**.

In **1942** when **Lyle** graduated from **PHS** there were 16 students in his class, Also **Pearland** played six-man football with about 15 players on the whole squad. We had two school buses to pick up and take home all the students in the district who needed transportation to school. One picked all the students east of **Highway 35** and the other all the students west of **35**. Our population was about 360 at that time.

One project which is now underway will be one which will preserve a big part of our history. It is the "Save the Old Depot" project which **Society Member Don Hayes** along with **Kim Sinistore**, executive director of the **Pearland visitors and convention bureau**, are working

This project when completed will be a big step in preserving our earlier history .When you read our history written by **Mrs. Coppinger**, the old depot was a major part of it.

Further in the Newsletter you can get more details on the project.

Don't forget our regular quarterly meeting coming up **Thursday, April 19th** at 7:00 P.M. As usual coffee, soft drinks, cookies and visitation follow the meeting. See you there.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A meeting of the group known as "**Pearland Heritage Restoration Committee** met **March 21st** at our **Pearland Historical Society** home site. Attending the meeting were **Mayor Tom Reid, Mickey Mark, Luther Cunningham, Gregg Stephens (architect wit STOA Architects) Project Manager, Diane Kliesing Day, Brenda Martin Riggs, Jerry Johnston, Samantha Hathaway, Phil Amick, Jo Ann Knodel, Amanda Hayes, Andrew Miller, Lori Kauniste, Constable Buck Stevens, Don Hayes and Kim Sinistore**.

Kim Sinistore was in charge of the meeting; and she introduced **Gregg Stephens, Architect** and **Project Manager**, who gave us an update on the plans for refurbishing the old depot and also plans for an additional building right behind the old depot (called “**Heritage Plaza**”). **Gregg** had drawings of the proposed renovation of the depot and also for the new building which would include a patio with walking blocks between the two buildings. Part of the old depot will be dedicated to historical items, i.e. **Pearland Historical** time line, etc.



Picture of old depot when it sat on the east side of the railroad track. After it was no longer in use, I believe it was the Pearland Garden Club which moved it to the west side of the track where it sat until moved down next to **City Hall** on **Liberty Drive**.

We are still considering our opening **Historical Building** to the public probably every other **Saturday** afternoon. When we decide to go ahead and do that we will need volunteers to be at the site when it is opened up to visitors. **Diane Kliesing Day** suggested we put up posters in **Killeen’s** and **Central Texas Barbecue** letting people know about the **Historical Society** being open on **Saturdays**.

Mike Wade suggested we add a **Pearland Sports History** timeline and offered to head up the project. We need to get our Thursday night work night going again to start the new projects. Also **Diane Kliesing Day** is working on putting

together a list of old time Pearlanders who served in **Vietnam**.

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AMONG OUR MEMBERS AND OLD TIME PEARLANDERS

Glenda Fay Garner, 1958 PHS graduate passed away February 10 in Deer Park. Glenda was a member of the long time Pearland Martin family Her father was Glenn Martin and mother Robbie Henry Martin. She is survived by sons Phillip Glenn Garner and Martin Todd Garner and wife Val and daughters Kelly and Leslie Garner and granddaughter Carol Garner and great grandsons Beckham and Braven.

Nelda Bristow, 1952 PHS grad, passed away March 11th after suffering with Parkinson’s disease for several years. The Bristow family is another long time Pearland family. Nelda’s Father worked for the Pearland Drainage District and was a “jack-o-all trades” in that he could repair small engines, etc. Many will remember her Mother, Mrs. Arlene Bristow was a long time Pearland school cafeteria worker. Nelda was preceded in death by her brother Robert and wife Donna. Nelda was a teacher at Spring Branch Memorial High School for many years before retiring back to Pearland.



Nelda Bristow lighting the memory candle for her brother, Robert at 2016 luncheon.

1965 graduate Robert Benson passed away March 21st.

Another long time Pearlander and 1961 PHS graduate, Betty Nan Porter passed away recently. Betty Nan grew up in the Porter home on the corner of Galveston and East Orange St. with her brother, James.

1961 PHS graduate, Marion Keith Jeffries passed away recently in Waco, Texas. Marion is survived by her husband, Carl Jeffries, three daughters and spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She is also survived by her twin sister, Margaret Keith Triplett and older sister and Historical Society member, Carrie Ann Keith Mitchell



John “Bootsie” Yost

Through the years **Bootsie** has probably been the number 1 **Pearland Oiler** football fan. He never missed a game, in town or out and in fact was at most of the **Oiler** practices to keep up with the team.

Society Member **Ray Kliesing** had a mild heart attack around **mid-February** and had a stent placed in his heart. It is good to report that the last info we received was that **Ray** has had a good recovery and is doing very good. **Ray** has been a big worker for the **Historical Society** through the years setting up and maintaining our web site and our facebook page and has been a regular at our **Thursday** night workshops.

Society Member Dwight Bittick has been going through some health problems recently and spent several days in the hospital after having colon surgery. **Dwight** is another member who has uncovered a lot of **Pearland** history by searching through the internet. As a matter of fact thanks to **Dwight** and **Society Member Tom Hunter** we now have a lot of information on **Witold Zychlinski** and **Mark Belt** which was unknown until uncovered by **Dwight** and **Tommy**, Their work has found a lot of history of **Pearland** which was previously unknown.

As I am writing this Newsletter, **Society Member Armilda Nichols Hall** is going through some health problems. **Armilda** went into the hospital about a week ago and was diagnosed as having a colon problem after having a colonostomy and other tests. As of this

Several of our members have encountered health problems since the last **Newsletter** and several continue to have problems. Please keep them all in your prayers.

Society member, **John “Bootsie” Yost** is going through a really rough time with lung infection, pneumonia and other problems. He has been in and out of the hospital for quite some time. We received an e-mail update on **Bootsie** yesterday (4/3/18) from his sister **Evelyn Yost Jones**. Below is a copy of Evelyn’s e-mail.

“I just came from visiting Bootsie. He is still at Kindred Hospital in Clear Lake, however they are planning to move him to Kindred Rehabilitation also in Clear Lake later this week for 3 weeks. After that, it just depends if he is able to walk. He is still very weak, but has improved a little. His pneumonia seems to be under control, His appetite has improved which was a concern as he was not eating at all. Lots of prayers are needed.”

time she has not received any results from the hospital tests.



Armilda Hall & Claude Lilley at 2016 Luncheon

Pearland's former first lady and **Society Member Truby Keller (Mrs. Dan Keller)** underwent a neck and upper back pressure surgery March 29th at Memorial Herman Hospital. Last report was that everything went well and **Truby** is recovering very nicely. Way to go. **Truby**.

As mentioned in previous **Newsletters Jenny Talbot and Carleen Mark** continue to be going through difficult times requiring quite a bit of home care. Please keep all of our members and old time **Pearlanders** who are going through some rough times in your prayers

David Smith's daughter **Leah** reports that **David** is doing well at **Trinity Oaks Assisted Living**. **Leah** says **David** enjoys short visits. **David** will be **92** in **August**.

. And now some good news. **Karen Kliesing, our Society Secretary Historical** who does a great job, is vacationing in **Japan**. She left **March 28th** and will be returning **April 6th**. We want to hear all about it at our meeting on the **20th, Karen**.

As mentioned earlier in the **Newsletter**. **Society Member Brenda Martin Riggs** sent this interesting story about her uncle **Lyle Martin, a 1942 PHS grad**.

Lyle Manor Martin was born November 13, 1924, in Pearland, Texas, to Roy Forrest Martin, Sr. and Fannie Catlin Manor Martin; he was the grandson of Pearland pioneer family Samuel Pleasant Martin and Elmira Munsell Martin.

A lifelong resident of Pearland he graduated from PHS in 1942. Lyle had eight siblings, Eve [1906], Eunice [1910], Warren [1912], Glenn [1913], Roy Jr. [1916], Pershing [1918], Evelyn [1926] and Myrtle. All Martin male children were born in Pearland and delivered by Dr. W. E. Long.



Upon graduation, his Mother was required to sign for his enlistment in the Army Air Corps because he was a few months shy of his 18th birthday. He was a pilot in WWII.



Lyle married Geraldine Ainsworth daughter of B. B. Ainsworth, Superintendent of Pearland Schools.

They had two sons, Lyle Manor Martin, Jr., and Geren Burton Martin.

Upon Lyle's return from the war, he and Wayne Miller [son of Miller, Sr.] were the proprietors of an appliance store in the "Green Building" located on FM 518, East Broadway

NOTE: *Other business housed in the Green Building [which was also a rooming house] were Livesay Store rooming house], Pearland State Bank, David L. Smith Realty, Birdsong Printing.*

QUESTION: *Do Society members remember any additional businesses in this building?*

Editor's Note: Some of our older members remember the Rozelle family ran a sandwich shop called the "Corner" and lived upstairs.



*Later , Lyle was the proprietor of an appliance store at 2111 North Main Street in Pearland. The summer prior to my 13th birthday, I answered the phone at this business. I earned \$1.00 and hour [!] and my dear friend, Judy Mahanay [Moore] would stay with me many days. Could you imagine leaving a 12 year old at a business today? **QUESTION:** Do Society members remember any addition businesses in this building?*



Lyle was very talented and artistic. Although he was a "lefty", his handwriting was beautiful!

Approximately 1960, Lyle and Geraldine divorced.

An avid hunter, Lyle didn't sit in a deer stand, he tracked! He was a gunsmith and restored guns for many Pearland friends and family.

Lyle was also a member of the Pearland Volunteer Fire Department. He loved to travel and search for arrowheads and acquired a remarkable collection through the years.

Approximately 1963, Lyle married Marlene Evans. They had one son, Russel Allen Martin, namesake of his uncle, Edgar Allen Lawhon, for which EAL Elementary is named.

Note: *Picture of the 2017 façade for Lawhon Elementary is reflected below.*



Lyle was an Interior Designer and Salesman for Suniland Furniture Company, Houston, Texas. He had an amazing gift for the interior design of homes.

Note: *Many members will remember Lester E. Williams of Pearland was the co-owner of Suniland. Rusty Williams, his son, was a 1962 PHS graduate. [During late 1940's and 1950's, they had the only swimming pool in this area]. Loved to go to their house!*

Marlene Martin was the proprietor of a jewelry store and Lyle designed, made and repaired jewelry. Upon his retirement, Lyle remained very active in the jewelry business, working in the garden with his brother "Dude" and he loved to play dominoes and cards with the family – especially the card game "Pitch."

Lyle passed away March 8, 2013 – remembered by those who knew and loved him.



Brenda Martin Riggs (right) with Historical Society Treasurer Peggy Farthing Long

Editor's Note: Thanks, **Brenda**. To those of us who remember the days of **WWII** and the **class of 42**, **Lyle's** story brings back a lot of memories. The **Pearland Oilers** had won the bi-district championship and the members of the class of 42 were looking forward to graduation, maybe college or finding a job when the **Japanese** bombed **Pearl Harbor**. Like **Lyle**, many of the boys of 42 volunteered for service upon graduation in **May, 1942**. Others in the class who were in service were **Buster Lawhon, Nolen King, Billy Hawk, Bea Brantley, John Benes, Victor Shore, LeRoy Watson and Lester Hood**. Also teachers **Jack Dempsey, Lloyd Hawkins, J. D. Satterwhite and Billy Wall** volunteered for service.

As mentioned earlier in the **Newsletter** we also received a short story about the **Kliesing Motor Company** from **Diane Kliesing Day**. **Diane's** story is as follows:

KLIESING MOTOR COMPANY

“Raymond V. Kliesing got his start in the automobile business by gathering bones of cattle that perished in the freeze of 1923. The fence lines west of Pearland were lined with frozen cattle. Raymond Kliesing gathered the bones from the dead cattle and hauled them to the bone mill at Harrisburg and Broadway in Houston, Texas. He sold the bones to raise money to finance the purchase of Rutherford Filling Station, an auto service garage in Pearland, Texas owned by James Daniel

Rutherford also known as Dan Rutherford. Raymond Kliesing purchased the filling that was located on Broadway Street between Livesay Building and Brantner ice house in 1924. He named the filling station “Pearland Garage.” In 1928 Raymond Kliesing obtained the Chevrolet franchise to open his car dealership. John Long was his first mechanic at the garage. Raymond Kliesing began selling new 1929 models. Pearland Garage became Kliesing Motor Company. The car dealership and garage was moved to new location on Main Street of Pearland in 1936.

Sources of information:

The History of Pearland, Texas by Rosalie Ferguson – page 76 and 82

Pearland, Texas A Centennial Celebration by Barte Haile – page 59

The Road to Polly Ranch, Friendswood, Texas page 41

Brazoria County Records Website

Brazoria County Historical Museum



Original Kliesing Motor Company building on Broadway Street.

Thanks **Diane** for giving us the story of how **Kliesing Motor Company** originally started. When my family moved to **Pearland** in **1940**, **Kliesing Motor Co.** was in the big building on **Main Street** with a café on one side as part of the building and a large dance hall upstairs which covered the agency and restaurants.

Across the street was the “**Red & White**” grocery owned by **Raymond**’s brother **Jess Kliesing** and wife, **Mabel**. As a 10 year old my favorite memory of the **Red & White** store is that if your family spent as much as \$5 for their groceries both my brother, **Roy** and I were given a free hand dipped triple dip ice cream cone from **Mabel**.

Previously in the **Newsletter** in discussing the old depot, we talked about it being a gathering spot for old time **Pearlanders**. One memory of **Kliesing Motor Company** is young guys going over to the railroad side track behind the station and watch workers from **Kliesing** unload brand new **Chevrolts** from the rail cars. Although the agency was probably in one of the smallest towns in the **State**, **Kliesing Motor Company** sold more **Chevys** than most any other in the state of **Texas**; and if my memory is correct one year they sold the most in that year.

For many years if you told someone you were from **Pearland** you would usually get a reply saying either “*oh yeah, I used to buy my Chevy there*” or sometimes, “*oh yeah, I remember all the dance halls and beer joints in that little town.*”

We have several members of the **Kliesing** family in our **Historical Society**. The **Kliesing** name is a large part of our early history.

Society Member Susan Smith Lenamon recently gave our **Society** a box of items which her cousin, “**Ikie**” **Miller** had saved from the **Jack Miller** family collection. One of the items in the collection was a framed picture of the **Webster High School class of 1931**. As most will remember, Pearland passed a bond issue for \$8000 to build a new high school in **1912**; and then a terrible hurricane in 1915 destroyed the school. So from **1915 to 1937 Pearland** high school students were bussed to **Webster** to attend high school. What was surprising was that in the **Webster** class of **1931** were 17 students and at least 6 were from **Pearland**.

Class president was Clarence Smith. Other recognizable Pearland names were Lucille Clark (January), Merle Tholen, Jack Miller, Vernon Halik, and Spartan “Sparky” Lane.

What was surprising to me was that **Pearland** students made up more than one third of the class. I think most of us assumed as I did that **Webster High School** was larger than that.

There were several other interesting items in the box One was a copy of the **1939/40 Pearland Gusher Yearbook**. Society member **Florence Jamison Gum**, was a member of the junior class, and was the captain of the girls basketball team. **Florence** is the oldest living PHS graduate.



Florence Jamison Gum talking with Mayor Reed at a recent Historical Society luncheon

The graduating class of 1940 had ten members..

One other interesting item Ikie had saved was an October **1955 Pearland Gusher** newspaper. The **Oilers** had lost their football game to **Missouri City** 12 – 0; but there was a picture in the paper of **Pearland Historical Society member Sally West Garner**, who was the **Pearland** candidate for the **Brazoria Fair Queen**.. (Note: Because of computer and printer problems I am unable to scan pictures, etc.)

EGOS AND EGOTISTS

An egotist is a man who tells you lots of stuff about himself that you were going to tell him about yourself.

Put two egotists together and you have an I for an I.

When you are wrapped up in yourself, you are a pretty small package.

A Little More about Pearland and WWII

For those of us who grew up in **Pearland** and who are old enough to remember the days when our country was at war, the memories are quite mixed. In the small community of **Pearland**, everyone had to pick up their mail at a tiny little post office on 518 just east of the old **Pearland Drug Store**. The post office was a somewhat meeting place where information was shared about Pearland men who were in service. The sad news was when one of our Pearlanders got killed or injured during the war.

1942 graduate, **Nolan King**, lost his life shortly after graduating from high school and entering the service. The thing which stands out in my mind as a **Pearland** student during the war was the “togetherness” in our country. Every citizen was on the same page - - which was we all pulled together to win the war. So I think most of us who remember that period will always remember our togetherness but also the sadness of losing our young men.

Historical Society members who I know served in are **Mayor Tom Reid and Charles Logan (1943 grad)**. Are there others?

We need names and addresses for members of the PHS class of 1968, the honored class at our annual reunion luncheon which will be Saturday, October 27th at the Pearland School

District Administration Building. If you have the name and address of a 68 grad, please e-mail it to mark325@prodigy.net.

Historical Society membership dues for the year 2018 became due Jan. 1st.

Dues paid in the last quarter of 2016 cover your membership through 2018

Don't forget our regular quarterly Historical Society Meeting Thursday Night, April 19h at 7:00 P.M. at our Historical Society home on Galveston Ave. Cookies, coffee, cold drinks and visitation will follow the meeting. See you there.

Every person is a book, each year a chapter. Mark Twain

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

William Arthur Ward
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PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Application

Date _____ Enclosed is my check in the amount of

\$ _____ covering membership dues of \$15 per person for the following

persons for the year 2018 Name _____

Name _____ Mailing

Address _____

_____ mail address _____

Phone Number _____

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

