

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

It is hard to believe but it is now almost a year since we were honoring the **class of 1967** and looking forward to another fun day at our annual reunion luncheon. I hope you all either have paid for your luncheon or will be doing so. We all enjoy visiting with old friends and classmates; but unfortunately, each year as we look back we realize some of those with whom we enjoyed visiting with last year are no longer with us.

Central Texas Barbecue has been catering our luncheon for many of the years we have been having one and do a great job. We were saddened that **Diana LeClere**, who along with her husband founded **Central Texas**, passed away recently. Our sympathies go out to **Diana's** family. Once again **Central Texas** will be catering our luncheon. We can all look forward to a delicious plate of barbecue to go along with our sharing of memories with old friends

Once again we will have our candle lighting ceremony to honor **Historical Society** members who have passed away during the past year and also old time Pearlanders who were not members of the **Historical Society** and members of the **Class of 68** no longer living. Further in the Newsletter you will see the list of members for whom we will be lighting candles.

Our next regular meeting will be **Thursday** night, **October 18th** at our site on **Galveston Avenue**. As you will read further in the **Newsletter**, we have a lot of issues to discuss and to vote on
Hope to see you there.

John D. "Mickey" Mark

What's Happening?

Society Member Don Hayes is leading the project to save the old depot. **Don** has reported that the **City Council** passed the budget for fiscal year 2019 including some funding of the repair project. We will be looking forward to **Don's** update at our meeting.

Society Member **Diane Kliesing Day** sent the following e-mail regarding the old depot.

"November 11, 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I.

On November 11, 1918, the telegraph operator at the train depot in Pearland received the news that World War I had ended.

The citizens of Pearland organized a parade to celebrate the end of the war.

Citizens met at the school building and marched down Main Street to the Old Settlers Cemetery. I remember you telling the story at one of the meetings, and some information came from Rosalie Ferguson's book."

Looking back at **Newsletter** interviews with old time **Pearlanders** back in the early 90's almost everyone interviewed spoke of the old depot as a social "hangout" for the little community. **Grandma Hunter and Mrs. Bundy**, when interviewed, recalled going to the depot and catching a train to go into **Houston** for groceries. Also I believe it was **Mrs. Bundy** who told of participating in in the celebration about which **Diane** e-mailed.

Hopefully we will have a Historical Museum at the depot fairly soon.



As mentioned in previous **Newsletters**, plans to open a **Horizon Montessori** public school are still proceeding. Below is a copy of an e-mail update received recently from **Valerie Staples**.

"We just got our plans in to the City for review. We were hoping for January, but it all depends on how long the City takes. We are going to the State trying to get the theater building recognized as a historic site too. I'm meeting with Brenda Riggs tomorrow for some pictures for the application."

Saving John Lizer Road

Recently the **Pearland City Council** voted to extend **Magnolia Blvd.** across **Highway 35** to **Liberty Drive** – thus eliminating the name "**John Lizer**" Road. Our **Historical Society** voiced our objections since **John Lizer** was a historic name in old **Pearland**. **Society Member Luana Concha (John Lizer's great granddaughter)** and I spoke at the Council meeting before they took their final vote; and we did succeed in getting the **Council** to maintain the name **John Lizer Road** from the **Pearland Parkway to Liberty Drive**. Our **Society's** motto is "**Dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of "Old Pearland"**". **John Lizer** certainly played a major role in our history.

Our thanks go out to **Society Member Don Hayes** for putting together a ceremony **Oct. 6th** with **Bartee Haile**, the author of the **Pearland Centennial Book** speaking. We will hear more about this also at our meeting **Oct. 18th**.



Bartee Haile, Author of Pearland Centennial Book

2019 will be the 125th year for the platting of the **Pearland Townsite**. **Brenda Martin Riggs** is writing/compiling a pictorial book about the history of **Pearland**. It will primarily be about "**Early**" business and advertisements, **Churches, Histories i.e., Telephone Co., Lions**

Club, Water District, etc., Houses, City, School, Old Settler's Cemetery, WWI and WWII veterans. It will not be about 'families' although there will be an update of the family histories that were included in the 1976 booklet "Early Days of Pearland." If you have any early pictures, histories, etc. that you can share, please email to: Lookingback.pearland@gmail.com

Below is a copy of the cover for Brenda's book:

 **LOOKING BACK...PEARLAND**
1894 - 2019
 125 years



Thanks go out to **Brenda** for taking on this project. It will be a great pictorial history of early days in **Pearland**.

Among our Members and old time Pearlanders

Since the last **Newsletter** we have lost two more **Historical Society Members**.

Patsy Talbot passed away September 27th after quite a long time of sickness. **Patsy** was always

very active in **Pearland** community activities. For many years she always baked sweets for our Historical Society meetings. She was a **1951** graduate of **PHS**. She was preceded in death by her husband, 1948 PHS grad **Bob Burtkett**. **She is survived by daughters, Kim Bays, Toni Detzler and Lisa Hallstrom sister Fay Talbot Whatley and brother Carl Talbot. Patsy** was always a fun person to be around. She will be greatly missed.



Patsy Talbot Burkett

Another Historical Society member and long time **Pearlander, Geraldine (Jerri) Cook**, passed away **Oct. 2nd**. **Jerri** went through school here in **Pearland** 1st grade through graduation in 1957. Many of our old time members will remember the Cook family (**Clayton, Allie Mae and children Betty Jane, "Cotton" Jerri, Pat, and Gloria Jean**) living across the railroad before **Orange Street** was open. The pipe yard is now where the **Cooks** lived. Their house was on the north end of **San Antonio** and the building is still there. The **Cook** family, the **Garner** family and the **Nichols** family and **Johnston** family all walked to school and back having to walk on **San Antonio** to **Broadway** (518) and then across the tracks and across Highway 35 to the school on **Grand Blvd.** – a distance of almost a mile.

Jerri was preceded in death by her **parents, sister Betty Jane, brother Cotton, and younger sister Gloria Jean**. She is survived by her **husband and companion Bob Holton, sister Pat, daughters Jacquelyn Tyson, Beverly**

Diane English and several grand children and great grand children.

>



Jerri Cook

We will be lighting individual candles for Historical Society members who have passed away since our 2017 luncheon. Others who have passed away besides Patsy and Jerri are **John “Little Boy” Cunningham; Ina K. “Ikie” Miller; John “Bootsie” Yost; and Reba Jean Eddings Kliesing.**

We have also lost several long time **Pearlanders** since the last luncheon. Former **Pearland School Superintendent, Preston Bullard**, passed away Sept. 29th. Preston was Superintendent from **1997 to 1992**. Our sympathies go out to wife, Marilyn, and family.



Preston Bullard

Fran Coppinger (Philpot) passed away recently. As most will remember **Fran** was the wife of long **Pearlander** and former **Mayor Vic Coppinger**. **Fran** was a hard worker for the City, starting the “**Clean Pearland Project**” which later became **Keep Pearland Beautiful.** She was also the first woman to serve on **City Council**.



Fran Coppinger Philpot

Other long time **Pearlanders** who have passed away since the last **Newsletter** are:

Billie Sue Garrison (Mother of Glenn Garrison); Helen Gonzales; James Earl Maynor; Dentry Triplett; Anna Bright (daughter of Mary Ann Kliesing Decas) and Carolyn Lesikar Moon (daughter of Woody Lesikar)

GOOD NEWS

Congratulations to **Society Member Florence Jamison Gum** who celebrated her **94th** birthday **September 23rd**. **Florence**, lives in **Lubbock**, graduated from **PHS** in **1941** and is the oldest living **Pearland High School** grad as well as the oldest **Pearland Historical Society** member.

From reading her Facebook page, **Florence** has a very active life with friends and church activities and certainly does not look 94 years old. She has been a regular attendee at our annual luncheons and hopefully will attend this year. **Happy birthday, Florence!!!!**



Florence Jamison Gum

More good news. **Susan Smith Lenamon** gave me an update of her Dad, **David Smith**. As most of you are aware, **David** is in **Trinity Oaks** and has been in and out of the hospital fairly recently. **David** is 92 years old and probably the 2nd oldest **PHS** grad and **Historical Society** member. **Susan** says **David** is doing “remarkably well” and his physical therapy has him walk with his walker for a short distance. He “looks great and feels good.” **Susan** says he loves visitors, as long as it doesn’t interfere with Bingo on **Thursday** afternoon and **Saturday** mornings.

Society Member Nolan West has been in and out of the hospital recently with breathing problems. Good to report that **Nolan** is back to the “**old codgers**” coffee group and seems to be doing much better.

Also **Society Member Dann Wheelock** has been in and out of the hospital recently with breathing problems. **Karen** reports that **Dann** is back home and doing much better.

Congratulations to **Martha Thurman Ellis** and **Claude Lilley** who recently married. Congratulations to two great persons and hope you have many years of happiness.

There have been several stories in the news lately about the old rice dryer being torn down and replaced by a business of some sort (can’t recall exactly what). Looking at this picture brings back a lot of memories to really old time **Pearlanders**.



I am not sure when the rice dryer was built but seems like it was the late 40’s or early 50’s. When we moved to **Pearland** in **1940** almost all the land west of **Pearland** was rice fields. The rice fields were kept flooded with water until it was ready to be threshed; and then the water was drained, the rice was bundled in sheaves and left to dry for 7 – 10 days before it was threshed. Those 7 or 10 days had to be dry days and some years the farmers would lose crops because of rain and the sheaves never drying out enough to be threshed. When the rice dryer was built the bundles of rice were taken directly to the rice dryer where they were dried and threshed.

Many of our members have great memories of swimming in the rice canals and hunting ducks in the rice fields. Another memory old timers will have is attending the barbecues at the rice dryer at the very end of rice season. The barbecue was free to anyone who wanted to attend. There was also free beer and a lot of gambling (card games, dice games) and a lot of fist fights. It was finally discontinued for that reason. This was around 1950 sometime. I do remember I was living at home and my parents forbid me from going.

The **Johnston** family was one of the west side families who farmed large acreage of rice farms.

Society Member Jerry Johnston wrote the following document which is very appropriate when remembering the old rice dryer.

*Rice Farming 101 -by Jerry and Ricky Johnston
Younger generation definitions by Alex, Erin & Johanna*

Growing up in a rice farming family. The following words became a a part of our vocabulary. We wondered how younger generations used them today. The first definition is the farming use. The second definition is from the younger crowd.

Clod: *A baseball (or larger) sized chunk of dirt.
(A stupid person, dork).*

Drag: *Device with rows of short spikes used to break up the clods.
(Boring, a queen of sorts, pull something around)*

Roller: *Large drums usually filled with water used to pack down dirt.
(Hair curler, the guy who makes joints)*

Drill: *Equipment used to plant seed and appl
Fertilizer into the ground.
(Routine, tool to make holes with, response to fire alarm)*

Scratcher: *Another device to work on those clods,
Spring teeth loosen up ground
(Fellow with a rash.)*

Gas Wagon: *Tank on wheels used to transport fuel to field. (Folks coming home from eating Mexican food.)*

Winch Truck: *Usually an old pare truck equipped
With gin poles to pick up and haul all the clod busting tools and other duties involving lifting.
(Tow truck, how bad girls get home.)*

Gin Pole: *A frame with pulley, cable and hook –
the lifting part of the winch truck.
(Survey about booze.)*

Land Plane: *Large grader blade mounted on long frame used to level out ground.
(Plane that can't take off, couple of bounces on the tarmac.)*

Levee Push: *V shaped device used to make levees to hold water.
(A plan to raise our taxes.)*

Bar Ditch: *Ditch to drain water away from field.
(Get dumped by your date at the bar, what you fall into if drunk)*

Water Boy: *Canal/river authority worker who opened/closed water supply gate.
(Person who keeps team hydrated.)*

Flagger: *Usually a kid who held flag at end of rice field to guide crop duster.
(Construction worker who always stops my lane)*

Flush: *First pass of water over the field to sprout the seed.
(Card hand, motor clean, potty move, lots of money)*

Allotment: *The amount of land the government allowed you to farm.
(Welfare check)*

Combine: *Machine used to harvest grain.
(Football team tryout)*

Header: *Front end of combine that cuts and pulls crop into the machine.
(Extra ball game, top of a business letter, calf roping)*

Auger Wagon: *Cart used to transport grain from combine to truck.
(Trailer full of drill bits, had no clue)*

Stool: *When crop sprouts and add leaves.
(Might need to be flushed, something to sit on)*

Boot: *When grain starts to form and travel up the stalk.
(Kick someone out. Nocona anyone?)*

Head Out: *When grain starts to appear.
(Leave, head for home, someone who forgot their hat.)*

Bluebonnet, Nato, Saturn: *Early day popular varieties of rice.
(State flower, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, planet)*

*Barrel: Rice was weighed and sold by the barrel – 162 lbs.
(Roll it out, something to catch rain water)*

Bin: The large silo seen on Rice Drier Road labeled AMERICAN RICE GROWERS CO-OP ASSOCIATION

Thanks, **Jerry**, brings back a lot of old rice field memories.

Class of 1968

As of Oct. 9th we have received replies from the following members of the Class of 68 saying they would be at the luncheon:

William Hunter and Shirley Lejsal Hunter, Dan Worrall and Mary Worrall, Don Benes and Frances McIntosh, Lynn and Charlotte Brown, Carol Whitehouse, Robert and Charlene Fassy, Stephanie Molina, Alford Cogbill, Henry and Kathryn Koontz, Geneva Ramiriz Garza and Ana Garza Escobedo, Billy Rains and Connie Malone, Willie Aguilar, Bill and Betty Sue Rogers, Waddell Heinrich, Gary Mahanay and Eileen Mahanay, Clay and Pattie Childress, Bonnie Burkhardt Allen.

As we approach the date of our luncheon (Saturday, Oct. 27th) don't forget to make your reservation. (See reservation form attached) Once again we hope to be blessed with nice weather. In that respect we have been very fortunate during the years and have usually had very nice weather. As I am writing this **Newsletter**, a major hurricane is approaching **Florida**. Ten years ago we were hit by **Hurricane Ike** which damaged **City Hall** and forced us to find a different location for our luncheon. The **Pearland School District** kindly let us use the cafeteria at **Pearland Jr. High West**. We often talk about early **Pearland** days when everyone helped everyone else. I recall that after **Ike** hit, **Carleen** and I were without electricity for 2 weeks as were many others. Everyone reached out to help others. Hopefully

we won't have any storms to interfere with our luncheon.

The best part of our luncheon is seeing and visiting with old friends you haven't seen in a while. Several people have commented that they saw people last year whom they had not seen since the previous luncheon. Below is a very appropriate quote:

Friends "Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow;

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead;

Walk beside me, and just be my friend."

~Albert Camus

The antidote for fifty enemies is one friend."
~Aristotle "

Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half a sorrow" ~Unknown

We listed the Historical Society members who have passed away since the last luncheon. As most are familiar with, at our luncheon we light one candle for each Historical Society member who has passed away since the last luncheon; and we light one large candle for all of the old time Pearlanders who have passed away and one large candle for all the 58 grads who are no longer with us.

The following 1958 grads have passed away: Michael G. Allen (not confirmed) Marcella C. Bell, Doyle Green, Debbie Guidry Green, Terry Knight, Elyse Opel Kettler, Sheryl Price Searcy, William "Bill" Osteen, Jan Sutter, Robert Spencer Taylor, Dwayne Smith and Charlene Barnes Fellers

Editor's Note: If memory serves me well, **Terry Knight** was killed in **Vietnam** in service for his country.

***DON'T FORGET OUR QUARTERLY MEETING
THURSDAY NIGHT Oct. 18TH 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***

We will have several interesting items on our agenda for the meeting. We will be once again re-affirming the nominations for officers. At the last meeting the following nominations were presented but it was determined that the officers would not take office until after the luncheon. Officers nominated were: **Jerry Johnston, President; Brenda Riggs, 1st vice president; Don Hayes, 2nd vice president; Marsha Swenson McDaniel, Treasurer and Karen Kliesing, Secretary.**

Comment: I want to take this opportunity to thank **Luther Cunningham, Peggy Long, and Karen Kliesing** for the great job they have done over the last several years they have been officers in the **Historical Society**. They all have been a tremendous help and have worked diligently for the **Society**. **Luther** was always ready to do whatever needed to be done. **Peggy** has done a great job which required a lot of work, lot of bookkeeping and record keeping. **Karen** has done a fine job as secretary and will continue to do so for the new administration. I would also like to also send out a note of appreciation to members **Dwight Bittick and Tom Hunter** for the all the historical research they both did. We mentioned **Bartee Haile's Pearland Centennial** book which was published in 1994 to honor our 100th anniversary. It is a great book; but **Dwight and Tom** have searched out and found a lot more history which was not known at the time **Bartee Haile** wrote the book. The biggest finds were that **Mark Belt** was actually a real person and not a railroad term. We now know a lot about **Mark Belt** and even have a picture of the man; and of course we now

know a lot of history about **Witold Zychlinski**, the founder of our town. We also now have pictures and history of the Zychlinski family. Great job, **Tommy & Dwight**.

Hope to see you at our meeting **Thursday** night. We have a lot of things to cover. The poem below is a reminder to be sure to plan to attend the luncheon. Always a lot of old memories to rehash with old friends.

A Friend

*A person who will listen and not condemn
Someone on whom you can depend
They will not flee when bad times are here
Instead they will be there to lend an ear
They will think of ways to make you smile
So you can be happy for a while
When times are good and happy there after
They will be there to share the laughter
Do not forget your friends at all
For they pick you up when you fall
Do not expect to just take and hold
Give friendship back, it is pure gold*

RETURN THIS FORM TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE AT THE PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY "REUNION LUNCHEON" SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27TH, 2018 AT THE PEARLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITY AT 1928 NORTH MAIN ST. TICKETS ARE \$15.00 PER PERSON _____

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

NAME _____ SPOUSE OR GUEST'S

NAME _____ Mail to: Pearland Historical Society, P.O. Box 1333,

Pearland, Texas 77588 Membership Form - - Pearland Historical Society Date _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____ covering membership dues of \$15 per person

for the following persons for the year 2018 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. Bo 1333, Pearland, Texas 77588