

PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 24, Edition 3

July, 2019

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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

"Make hay while the sun shines. You've all heard that expression. Mother Nature I not cooperating. Every time the brothers and I get ready, it rains. Plenty of grass this year but plenty of water, too. I'm now the official hay raker. I haven't done that since I was maybe 14. I was told to watch a youtube video for pointers. I think It will come back to me! Invites have gone out to the class of 1969 for the luncheon Oct. 26th. Approximately 70 addresses were found. We look forward to a good turnout including Society members and friends.

Really looking forward to Brenda's book. I think it will be the most complete history to date. New stories and photos keep coming in. Thanks to everyone who has shared with her.

There are a few more odds and ends on display at the office, including an award received from te PCVB for Society support of the Depot Project. Keep an eye on local news sources for information about the 125th anniversary of Pearland.

Jerry Johnston

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Happy 4th of July to all. I am working on this issue of the Newsletter on the afternoon of the 4th; and thinking about how much Pearland has changed through the years. Many of you will remember that all day of the 4th of July it would sound like a war zone with all the fireworks going off. They would usually start a day or so ahead of the 4th and last a day or two after.

Ironically I was just reading the Pearland Journal last night and saw that the City of Pearland has an ordinance which prohibits both the shooting of fireworks within the City and also prohibits possession of fireworks with a fine of \$2000 for either shooting or possessing fireworks. What a difference when you could go in the old Corner Drugstore and buy a pack of "Black Cat" fireworks for probably a quarter. Also available were Roman Candles, sky rockets and other types of fireworks. How many remember the fireworks stand that was between the old Oblinger Garage and Mrs Cunningham's ice house? Do you remember when someone threw some sort of firecracker in the booth and caught it on fire. As the booth burned all the fireworks in the booth started exploding! I think it was probably in the late 50's: but that was something to remember.

In Jerry's message he mentioned about 70 members of the class of 69 had been found and were receiving invitations to our Luncheon in Oct. That is also a big change from days of past. Further in the Newsletter is a lot of interesting "old Pearland" history from 1st Vice President Brenda Riggs. Among the info is the number of PHS grads at the start of each decade. In 1950 Pearland had 10 in the graduating class.

It is also interesting to search the internet for what was happening in 1969. The one thing that affected everyone was the war in Vietnam.

It is also interesting to look at prices in 1969. The average price for a gallon of gas was 38 cents; but if you add in inflation that is the equivalent of \$2.48 gallon today. Cigarettes were around 30 cents per pack.

The major difference I can see is the huge difference in technology. In 1969 we didn't know what an I-Pad was. Now practically everywhere you go you see people reading or texting on their I-Pads.

It will be interesting at our luncheon this year to remember what life in Pearland and the U. S. was like in 1969 and to visit with old friends at our luncheon. Hope you plan to come.

Mickey Mark

AMONG OUR MEMBERS

Society Member Dwight Bittick has been going through a rough time recently being in and out of the hospital. **Dwight** is now home but needs his walker to navigate around. Hope to see him at the "**Old Codgers Coffee Club**" on a regular basis again.

The last report on Peggy Long is she continues to be in the Atria Assisted living nursing home in Friendswood continuing with physical therapy..

Jenny Talbot continues to be going through a rough time in the nursing home in Alvin. Carl makes daily trips to be with her.

Kenny Mark (Carleen and my older son who is 62 and a PHS 1975 grad) recently had a quadruple heart by-pass. He went for a stress test and was told he needed a stent. When the procedure was started, the doctor found he needed 4 by passes. He has made a rapid recovery and is doing well. The surgery was June 28th.

Bob and Ann Peirsol's son, Robert Jr., passed away June 14th, Robert was in the fourth stage (I believe) with Parkinson's disease. Our sympathies go out to Bob and Ann.

Presley Hood, 1965 PHS grad passed away recently. I believe he was in Missouri. Presley was the son of Claude and Millie Hood.

Society Member Kim Sinistore, who is the President of the Pearland Visitors and Convention Bureau has announced her retirement. Below is a copy of Kim's announcement.

It is with mixed emotions that I say "I am retiring".

I have enjoyed my time selling, promoting and marketing Pearland as a destination to visitors and tourists!

I have greatly enjoyed meeting you all and thank you for your partnership, support and friendship through my 6+ years in Pearland!!

Memories we create are because of the people and experiences we have...!

I take with me fond memories of great people and a great city, PEARLAND!!

Editor's Note: We wish Kim a very happy retirement and appreciate very much all the help she has given our Historical Society.

As mentioned previously, 1st Vice President Brenda Riggs, furnished some interesting stories for this Newsletter. Brenda is working on a pictorial history of old Pearland and would still like to have any old historic pictures any of our members might have.

Pearland ISD

Graduates through the years

by Brenda Martin Riggs

Gusher yearbooks were located for each decade for a count of graduates in each class.

Below is a comparison:

<u>Year</u>	<u># of Grads</u>
1940	10
1950	8
1960	27
1970	174
1980	393
1990	295
2000	441
2010	890
<i>PHS 460 DHS 430</i>	

2019 1,620
 PHS 706; DHS 606;
 THS 270; PACE 38.

Enrollment:	<u>21,671</u>
Elem Schs	8043
Jr. Highs	3397
Middle Sch	3392
High Schs	6831
BCJJAEP	8

Our quaint little town has changed. The corner drugstore, Red & White Grocery, Kliesing Mtr., Mom’s Café, Monarch Garage, Jim Mahanay’s Barber Shop, are no more

I miss those days!

.....

Central Texas Barbecue celebrates 50 years!!



Ruth LeClere, owner of Central Texas BBQ, Mayor Tom Reid, Brenda Martin Riggs, Vice President, Pearland Historical Society

The ceremony conducted by the Pearland Chamber of Commerce was held Wed., May 19, 2019.

Several public officials were present for this occasion:

Mayor Tom Reid, Ed Thompson, State Rep., Buck Stevens, Constable and Roy Castillo, Justice of the Peace.

Central Texas opened its doors in 1969 and is the oldest Pearland restaurant.

Congratulations to the LeClere’s and Central Texas!

And..... Thanks for catering the Pearland Historical Society annual luncheon for many years

THE 1949 QUONSET HUT GYM

by Brenda Martin Riggs

A 220 million dollar bond election was held on the Pearland ISD November 2016 ballot.

36% of the registered voters cast a ballot and the bonds were approved.

Included in the package was the demolition of the 1949 Quonset Hut Gymnasium [North Galveston Avenue] to enable the District to construct and move the offices of Pearland Jr. High West to the front of the building for safety measures.

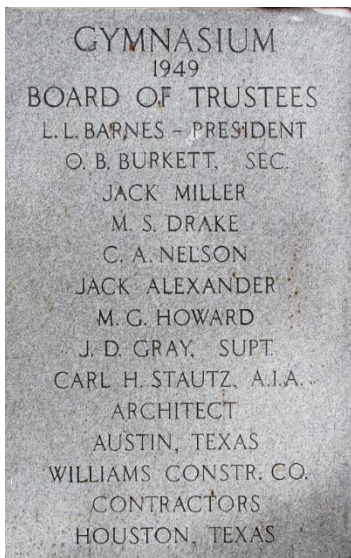
Pearland ISD April 15, 1949 Minutes reflects a \$113,060 contract for the construction of the gym.



There were two gymnasiums in 1949. The top floor of the 1912 two-story high school on North Grand Boulevard was destroyed in the 1915 storm. In 1937 the building was converted to a gymnasium. This gym was demolished approx. January 1966 for additional classrooms at Pearland Elementary School.



Arrow Services, Inc., 10202 Airline Drive, Houston, was awarded the contract to demolish the Quonset Hut Gym. They began the project by removing the plaque which the District will place in another building.

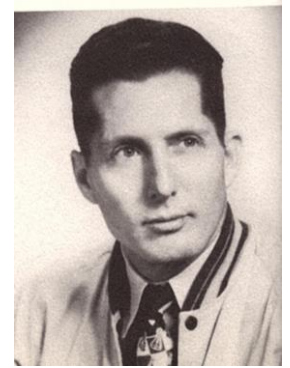


The removal of asbestos material began as well as salvaging as much of the interior as possible.

In 1950 Coach Buck Brooks and Coach W. H. "Jug" Backhaus [both single at that time] lived in an apartment on the upper floor at the back of the gym. Rental property was scarce in those days



COACH BACKHAUS



COACH BROOKS

Coach Brooks assisted Mrs. Florene Little through the 1955.56 school year to enable the Girl's Basketball team to advance to the State Tournament in Austin - the first team from Pearland High School to participate in a State Tournament.

Society members have many fond memories in this 70 year old Quonset Hut Gymnasium: volleyball and basketball practice, games and pictures for the Gusher yearbook, pep rallies, etc.

Have to mention... prior to the safety pads on the walls behind the basketball goals - - my sister hit the West wall and lost part of a tooth. If walls could talk.....

The demolition began Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 7:30 a.m



Sadly, four hours and 10 minutes later [11:40 a.m.] the 1949 Quonset Hut Gym was rubble

I requested mementos for the Historical Society – not knowing what that might possibly be from a gymnasium. The Contractor graciously saved lockers, a bench and numerous pieces of the wooden floor – which we hope to have picture frames made for the Society.

A ‘new’ boys gym was constructed from the 2016 bonds - believe it was completed late 2018. In 2019 the ‘girls’ gym will be where the old boy’s gym was constructed in 1965.

Note: In 2019 the number of registered voters:

Pearland ISD: 62,911 + 1309 Harris County.
City of Pearland: 65,880 + 7,401 Harris and Fort Bend County

Thanks for the memories, Brenda. One thing I remember about the Quonset hut gym was with the coaches living upstairs the gym was pretty much always open for anyone to go in and play basketball - - - which resulted in Pearland having a very good basketball program back in those days.

DEPOT PROJECT

Don Hayes sent the following info about the old depot project

“The project to Restore the Pearland Depot is underway, but needs the help and support of our membership. Please consider the purchase of a memorial brick paver, which will help fund the restoration, while recognizing your family’s contribution to the project. Pavers start at \$150 each. Larger donations can also be accepted. Pavers may be purchased during the Society’s quarterly meeting, or from the project website at www.pearlanddepot.com. “

When shopping at Kroger’s I have noticed how many older women who are very much more overweight than their husbands which reminds me of this one liner:

“Women who carry a little extra weight live longer than their husbands who mention it.”

LOOKING BACK

Earlier in the Newsletter we discussed honoring the class of 1969 and what was happening in Pearland and the world in 1969. Probably the Vietnam war and the effect on our country was the thing people were most concerned about. Most of the people felt it was a war we should not have been involved in and unfortunately our men and women in the services were not as honored as those who had fought in the World wars nor the Korean war. Thanks to Diane Kliesing Day for providing a list of Pearlanders who served during Vietnam. They were **Ronald Allen Alexander; Jerome Leonard Armbruster; Danny Ray Conaway; Ray Lee Greer; David Earl Griffin; Jack Wesley Haltom, Jr; Stanley Lester Honeycutt; Delbert Lee Jamison; Mickey Johnson; Myron Thomas Klieising; Roy Forrest Martin III; Manuel Milstead; Don Warren Nelson; Bobby Edsel Thompson and Richard Lee Weaver.**

58,000 Americans lost their lives in Vietnam. Unfortunately we lost three Pearlanders who gave their lives for the service of our country: Margarito Fernandez; Terry Knight; and Jose Pena, Jr.

It is sad those who served this country during the Vietnam conflict never received the recognition they deserved.

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On July 20, 1969 Buzz Aldrin and Neil Amrstrong landed the Apollo 11 on the surface of the moon to be the first to walk on the surface of the moon.

(Editor's note) While Society Member Luther Cunningham and many others offer evidence this moon walk never happened, it was probably the biggest news event of 1969.

Another topic often discussed is the difference in TV shows today back in 69. In 1969 the whole family would sit back and watch shows like "Green Acres", "Hee Haw", "Beverly Hillbillies", and "All in the Family". Today it is difficult to find shows that are clean enough for the whole family to watch.

Don't forget our quarterly Historical Society meeting coming up Thursday night, July 18th at 7:00 P.M at our Historical Society home on Galveston Ave.

Guest Speaker at the meeting will be State Representative Ed Thompson who will give us an update on what is going on in the "House" in Austin. Ed always has an interesting talk about the latest information from Austin.

Cookies, cold drinks, coffee and visitation will follow the meeting. See you there.

Reservation form for annual luncheon is on next page.

Anger is never without Reason, but seldom with a good one.

Benjamin Franklin

RETURN THIS FORM TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE AT THE PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY "REUNION

LUNCHEON" SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26TH, 2019 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 2019

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

