

# PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pearland Historical Society

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here's hoping that all of you living in the **Pearland/Houston** area survived **Hurricane "Harvey"** with minimal damage and inconvenience. Although **Harvey** was not a wind damaging hurricane, it will still go into the record book for the most rain in 24 hours and for all the flooding. I know several of our **Historical Society** members did have quite a lot of damage from water in their houses. Fortunately many of us did not get water damage nor did we lose electricity. Being without electricity brings back a lot of memories of what we sometimes call the "**good ole days**" - - back when we did our homework by the light of a kerosene lantern, got water from a pitcher pump outback and trips to the bathroom were to the little house outback.

Several of our **Historical Society** members have made monetary donations to help out the Pearland residents who were hit hard by **Harvey**. If anyone wishes to make a donation, you can send your check to **Pearland Neighborhood Center, 2335 N. Texas Ave., Pearland, Texas 7758**

As the years pass, as we older members look at the list of names from the **class of 67** who will be attending our annual luncheon most of us are probably thinking they are all a group of youngsters. It is always fun to get together each

year and reminisce about those "**good ole days**" and to catch up on what is happening in the lives of our old friends. Hope to see you there.

John D. "Mickey" Mark

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Don't forget our annual **reunion luncheon** coming up **Saturday, Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>** at the **Pearland School Administration Building**. As you are aware the PHS graduating class of **1967** will be the honored class this year. As mentioned in the **July Newsletter** we sent out 62 invitations to class members. So far we have 31 members who have replied they will be coming. Thirteen of the 21 also will be accompanied by their spouses - so as of now there will be 44 **class of 67** reps at the luncheon. Below is a list of **67 grads** who have indicated they will be at the **luncheon**:

*Jayne Ann Miller; Marolynne Swann Huber; Joe Sconyers & wife Janice; Duncan Williams & wife Jackie; Ronny Julian & wife Peggy; Robert King & wife Rita; Cindy Alexander; Karan Scott Wheelock & husband, Dann; Mike Wade & wife Pam; Ronnie Johnson & wife Brenda; Richard Lopez & wife Linda; Wes Haltom; Yvonne Jeffries Kempken & husband Rick, Marsha Swensen*

*McDaniel; Linda Cockrell Ward; Jerry Johnston & wife Janet; John Kegley & wife Wendy; Peggy Bramlett Wills & husband; Elaine Wilson; David Hokanson & wife Pam.*

As usual we will have a candle lighting ceremony to honor our **Historical Society** members who have passed away since the last reunion; also the old time **Pearlanders** who have passed away and the members of the **class of 1967** who have passed on. Individual candles are lit in honor of the **Historical Society Members** and one large candle for old time **Pearlanders** and a large candle for class of **67**.

Our sincere thanks go out to the **Pearland School District** and to **Keith Ordeneaux** for the use of their facilities for our luncheon. It is a great place and certainly is an appropriate setting for the class of 67's 50<sup>th</sup> graduation anniversary.



Our thanks go out to **Society Member Phil Amick** for his donation of the two beautiful display cabinets to our **Historical Society**. They will be really useful for the displaying of historical documents and artifacts at our **Historical Society** site on **Galveston Ave**.

In previous **Newsletters** we have mentioned that **Horizan Montessori Charter Schools** had plans to buy the old complex on **Grand Blvd.** and to open a **Charter School** for grades one through eight. Their hopes were to open the school this past **Sept.** Their representative reports that progress with the

**City** has been very slow but their plans still are to open the school at a later date. As you are aware, the building on the southern end of the complex (the original old high school built in 1937) is a designated **Texas Historical** site. (Further in the **Newsletter** is a story by **Historical Society** member **Tom Hunter** about his **Dad, Robert Hunter**, who was a member of the first graduating class (**1938**) to attend that old school.

In our **April** issue of the **Newsletter** was a great story written by the late **Marguerite Massey Smith** recounting the history of the storm of **1915** destroying **Pearland's** brand new two story school and students having to attend **Webster High School** from **1915** until the new school opened in **1937** after **Pearland** citizens approved a \$35,000 bond issue to build the school.

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### **AMONG OUR MEMBERS AND OLD TIME PEARLANDERS**

The sad part of writing this **Newsletter** is the reporting the loss of **Society Members** and old time **Pearland** citizens.



**Barbara Christofferson Maynor**

**Society Member Barbara Christofferson Maynor** passed away **August 23<sup>rd</sup>**. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Willie Dan Maynor**, her sister **Gertrude (Dixie) Jackowski** and brothers, **C. J. and Neils Christofferson**. She is survived by her sister and **Historical Society Member Lois**

**Roth**, daughters **Diana Gunnells**, and **Carol “Cissy” Shifferty** and son and **Historical Society Member John Maynor**.

**Barbara** was a member of the **PHS** graduating class of **1949**. The class of 49 had 12 graduates (9 girls and 3 boys). Surviving class members are **Reba Eddings Kliesing**, **Carleen Nichols Mark** and **Juanita Stone Sutherland**. **Barbara** was a very active member of our **Society** and even though her health really deteriorated in the last couple of years she was still a faithful attendee at our meetings. Our deepest sympathies go out to the family

Another long time **Historical Society member Gertrude Gotcher Logan** passed away suddenly **Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>**. Our sympathies go out to husband **Charles “Chink” Logan** and family. **Gertrude** attended **PHS** through her sophomore year (1943 – graduating class of 1945) and was a member of the outstanding all girls drum and bugle corps. She and **Chink** were faithful attendees at our annual luncheons. She will certainly be missed. **Gertrude** is pictured below with husband **Charles**.



**Charles and Gertrude Logan**

Society Member **Sharon Crawford Mathews** passed away **August 7<sup>th</sup>**. **Sharon** was a member of the **PHS** graduating class of **1958**. She was preceded in death by her parents **Kenneth** and

**Rosie Theriot Crawford**, husband **Lynn Mathews** and brother **Lynn Crawford**. She is survived by daughters **Melissa Coleman** and **Susan Beatty of League City**; son **David Mathews of Pearland**; sister **Peggy Maddison** and brother **John Crawford of Friendswood**. Many of our members will recall traveling with **Sharon** on trips arranged by **Corky** and **Alice Segelquist**.

Our sympathies go out to all of **Sharon’s** family.

We also lost members of old **Pearland** families. Former teacher, coach, school principal and assistant superintendent, **Herb Carleston** passed away on **July 13<sup>th</sup>** at the home of his daughter in **Duxbury, Ma.** **Herb** spent 34 years working in the **Pearland** school system and was honored for his faithful service by having the naming of **Herbert Carleston Elementary School**. **Herb** grew up in **Giddings, Tx.** and was an outstanding player on the **Giddings** state champion football team of **1951**. After his retirement **Herb** returned to **Giddings**.

**Norma Wilkinson** passed away on **August 13<sup>th</sup>**. Her husband was **Odis Wilkinson** who ran the **Mobil** station in the middle of town across from the old **Pearland Drug Store**

**Maudell Smalley Bittick** passed away **August 17<sup>th</sup>** after suffering a severe heart attack. **Maudell**, who was a member of the **Pearland High School class of 1960**, was the widow of **Garland Bittick**, class of **1958**. She was living in **Groveton, Texas**. **Maudell** was a member of the long time **Pearland Smalley** family which included **Henri Jean**, **Myrtice**, **Maudell**, **Dallas**, **Greg**, and **Jacob**.

**Judy Mahanay Moore** passed away **Friday, September 15, 2017**, in **San Antonio, Texas**. She was preceded in death by her parents, **Tillman and Thelma Mahanay**; and sister, **Maureen Gordy**. **Judy** leaves to cherish her memory, her husband of 54 years, **M. Carol Moore**; son, **Greg Moore**; grandchildren **Josh** and **Hannah Moore**; and a host of friends. **Judy** was a graduate of **Pearland High School [1959]** and **Durham Business School**.

Upon retirement from **Texas A&M**, she and **Carol** moved to the **Kerrville** area.

**Society Member Mark McQuiller** advises that former **Pearland** football coach **Bob Howard** recently passed away around **August 8<sup>th</sup> in Granbury, Tx.** **Coach Howard** was Head football coach and Athletic Director at **Pearland** from **1966 - 1970**. In **1967**, **Pearland** shared the **24 AA Tri-District Championship** with **Sweeny and Needville**. There was a coin flip to determine who would advance to the playoffs and it was won by **Sweeny**. **Coach Howard's** wife **Evelyn** was a high school **English** teacher.

**Mark** said he did some research and found that **Coach Howard** coached Texas high school football for 17 years and had a 108 - 62 - 6 regular season record and a 5 - 5 playoff record. He started coaching in 1955 at **Boyd and then Bronte, Marfa, Elgin, Pearland, Lake Worth** and his final season was at **Crosbyton** in **1973**. His record at **Pearland** was **21 -19**.

Several of our members are going through some health problems. Please keep them in your prayers.

Around **August 18th**, **Society Member Reba Jean Eddings Kliesing** suffered a stroke and was taken to **South East Memorial Hospital**. After a few days **Reba** went into rehab and came home **August 28<sup>th</sup>**. She will continue to receive home therapy but reports are she is doing well.

**Society Member Dwight Bittick** went into the hospital on **Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>** after being diagnosed as anemic. **Dwight and Tommy Hunter** are the two “**high tech historians**” of our **Society**. Both have come up with **Pearland** history facts that were unknown before being found by either **Dwight or Tommy**.

**Society Member John “Little Boy” Cunningham** continues to have home health care and from reports from his twin brother, **Luther**, **Little Boy’s** condition (congestive heart problems) remains about the same as reported in **July**. **Luther** did say

that when he checks on “**Little Boy**”, his usual response is “*o.k. I’m still vertical*”.

As mentioned in the **July Newsletter Society Members Jennie Talbot and Carleen Mark** continue to need day to day help at home.

**Society Member John “Bootsie” Yost** has been going through a very difficult period. His sister, **Society Member Evelyn Yost Jones**, e-mailed us the update below.

*“ Bootsie had double pneumonia caused by the norcardia bacteria which acts like a fungus. It is caused by breathing bacteria that comes from water or soil. He was in the hospital 2 times and then in Tuscany Rehab for 28 days. It took a long time for a correct diagnosis. At first he was being treated with the wrong antibiotics. He was very, very sick. He went home from rehab yesterday, Oct. 6. and is doing well.”*

Please keep our members who are going through difficult health problems in your prayers.

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**Society Member Rhonda Baker** sent us the following e-mail on **Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>**.

*I wanted to let you know that I will be moving to Austin on Oct 6. My sweet little aunt passed away in August and my daughters want me to move up there and be close to them. My grandchildren are there too so I am going to go and be near them so they will quit worrying! I do still want to be a member though!!*

Good luck, **Rhonda**, and we will certainly miss you at our quarterly meetings.

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Congratulations to **Society Member David Smith** who turned **91** on **August 15<sup>th</sup>**. **David** is one of three surviving members of the class of **1943**. Others are **Charles “Chink” Logan and Lois Watson Ross**.

Also our congratulations go out to **David's** daughter, **Historical Society member Susan Smith Lenamon** who will receive the **Sam Houston State "Distinguished Alumni Service Award on October 20<sup>th</sup>**. **Susan** served 13 years on the alumni board of directors and was president in **2013**. Quite a deserved honor for **Susan**.

**Society Member Florence Jamison Gum**, who lives in **Lubbock, Texas**, celebrated her **93<sup>rd</sup>** birthday on **Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>**. (See photo below)



When you look at that picture it is hard to believe **Florence** is **93** years old! She was a **1941 PHS** graduate and with the recent passing of **Mildred Cogbill**, **Florence** is now the oldest **Pearland High School** graduate. **Mildred** was a member of the class of **1940** and was **95** when she passed away. Congratulations, **Florence**, and keep up the good work. You look great

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### A Bit of Pearland Trivia

As mentioned above, **Society Member Reba Kliesing** just returned home from rehab after suffering a stroke back in August. Her son, **Society Member Ray Kliesing**, recently sent us an e-mail asking the name of the old café in **Pearland** which **Virgil Keneaster** ran. He said his **Mom** had worked there but couldn't remember the name.

My first thought was "**Mom's** Café" and then I realized **Mom's** Café was run by **Mrs. Haney** and was on the north end of **Main** while the one **Ray**

was asking about was just south of the current site of "**What-a-burger**". I called **Luther Cunningham** and he remembered the name of the café was the **Mary Lou**. Do you remember the **Mary Lou**? If anyone has a picture of it, we would like to have a copy

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Earlier in the **Newsletter** we wrote about our traditional candle lighting ceremony. As mentioned a separate candle will be lit for members who passed away since our luncheon last year. Those members are: **Glois Masseey; Ed Adams; Susie Helen Adams; Barbara Burkett Lilley; Barbara Maynor and Gertrude Logan**.

An individual large candle will be lit in honor of old time **Pearlanders**; The old timers known to have passed away in the last year are as follows: **Kathy Hokanson; Dr Charles Hand; Norman Weber; Jack Harris; Norma Wilkinson; Maudell Smalley Bittick; Judy Mahanay Moore and Sharon Crawford Mathew**

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The following story by **Society Member Tom Hunter** is about his **Dad, Robert Hunter**, who was a member of the **1938 PHS** graduating class – the first class to graduate from the **Historic Pearland High School on Grand Blvd**.

### *Robert Hunter, PHS Class of 1938*

*On a wall inside the entrance of Pearland's Leon Sablatura Middle School on Galveston Avenue is a plaque installed in the original junior high school building in 1959, which lists members of the Board of Trustees. Among the names is Robert L. Hunter, Jr. He was the son of Robert L. Hunter and Julia Martin Hunter, whose names appear on the Texas Historical Commission marker on Orange Street at the front of Hunter Park*

*Robert L. Hunter, Jr. was born in the old Hunter house at the northwest corner of Orange Street and Galveston Avenue in Pearland on December 21, 1919. He grew up in Pearland and attended*

*schools in Pearland, Webster, and at Milby High School in Houston until the first high school classes were held in Pearland in September of 1937. He graduated the following spring in the first graduating class of Pearland High School in 1938.*

*He joined the Army in 1940, served a year and was discharged in the fall of 1941. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he re-enlisted in the Army and in August of 1942, while in training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, saw President Franklin D. Roosevelt from a distance in the first of several encounters with men who were or would become president of the United States.*

*While "Somewhere in England," he wrote a letter to his mother, Julia Martin Hunter, that was dated June 29, 1944, and was later published in the September 14, 1944 edition of The Alvin Sun. The 2,500-word story recounted his trip to London and appeared on the front page of the newspaper along with his photograph.*

*He served in the European Theater and at the end of the war, ended up in Germany while serving with the 114th Signal Radio Intelligence Company. In another letter sent to Pearland from Frankfurt, Germany dated 28 July 1945, he wrote about seeing General Eisenhower:*

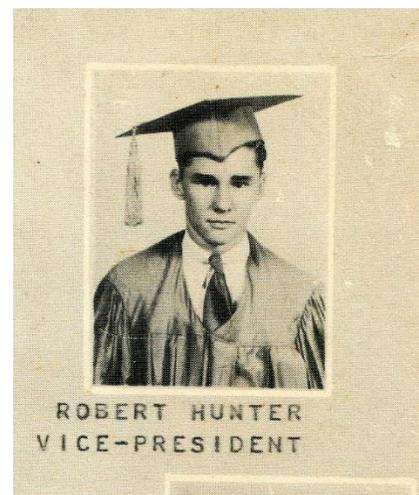
*"We are staying in a German home (taken over by the army) that is only a stone's throw from Gen. Ike's office. We are across the street from the colorful and modern I.G. Farben Bldg. that houses Ike and his immense staff! This morning we walked over, took a look around, went past Ike's office and waited around to see him, yet he was apparently busy! The guard told us he probably wouldn't come out for lunch, has them brought up to him, and said it's often that Ike will be in his office all day long. Hardest working general he ever saw! But this day at noon he came out and we had a nice long look at him as he waited for his five star emblemed Cadillac. You'd think that man never had a worry in his life, always smiling, always grateful to be alive, always energetic and alert, always just plain old Ike! . . ."*

*In 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected 34th president of the United States.*

*At the end of World War II, Robert L. Hunter, Jr. received his second discharge at Fort Logan in Denver, then married Veora Thomas in Trinidad, Colorado on December 14, 1945 and returned to Pearland. He worked for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company and in 1956 built a house on Galveston Avenue, across the street from what is now Leon Sablatura Middle School, where he lived with his wife, son Tommy, and daughter Carol until July of 1963, when he was transferred from Houston to Austin.*

*On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was scheduled to fly to Austin after his speech at the Trade Mart in Dallas. Following his assassination, it was necessary to set up communications between the White House and President Lyndon B. Johnson's ranch in Stonewall, Texas, west of Austin. Robert L. Hunter, Jr. was assigned to the telephone company entourage that accompanied the president when he was in Austin or at the ranch. At midnight on December 31, 1963, while in a group at Austin's Driskill Hotel, "Bob" Hunter wished President Johnson a Happy New Year.*

*Robert L. Hunter, Jr. died in Austin, Texas on September 15, 1970 and was buried in Trinidad, Colorado.*



*When we see a picture in an old annual, or look at a name etched in stone or on a plaque fashioned in a foundry and weathered by age, we seldom get a sense of the person behind the name. May the preceding account about a name on the wall at Leon Sablatura Middle School provide a partial portrait of the man who was my father, Robert Hunter, a member of the first graduating class of Pearland High School in 1938.*

**Tom Hunter,  
PHS '65**



**Tom Hunter (right) with Lloyd Hawkins at one of our Reunion Luncheons**

Thanks, **Tom**, and thanks for the work you do in keeping the history of **Pearland** current

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The following story was sent by **Jerry Johnston**. **Jerry** was a member of the **PHS** class of **1967**

**REMEMBRANCES FROM THE 50'S AND 60'S**

*By: Jerry Johnston (Class of 1967)*

*According to one of my uncles, when your belly button touches your backbone you have the "miss meal colic". I can assure you that the Johnston family never suffered from that malady. Being a farm family, we raised cattle, sometimes a few hogs, turkeys, chickens, and from time to time a garden. My grandmother, Thelma, was the world*

*champion chicken neck wringer. She loved chicken, especially the part that flew over the fence last. We also enjoyed deer meat from Boerne and a quail or two hunted in the rice fields. My Dad, Buck, tried raising rabbits; but you start out with two and quickly have fifty. It just didn't seem right to eat the Easter bunny, so he gave them away.*

*There was a large A frame out back used for skinning and a black pot for boiling. Our garage housed a butcher shop complete with meat saw, heavy duty grinder, butcher blocks and sunsry other necessities. Oveer sixty five plus years later, we still use these things. Butcher time meant all hands; grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, kids on deck. This was an assembly line operation.*

*We didn't eat a lot of fish, but did catch a few at camps on Chocolate Bayou and Matagorda. Once a year, a fellow kin to Allie Richardson and Joann Davis, would bring a load of shrimp to the house and once again the family was over to clean shrimp and get them in the freezer.*

*Our bunch never canned much, except for a few pickles once in a while and fig preserves. The figs came from a huge tree at Ben and Laura Del Anthony's dairy (corner of Woody and 518). Figs and other vegetables also came from Mr. Frank's (Nelson) and his wife who lived on the corner of Old Galveston and 518 I think this was a neighborly trade deal as my Mother, Margery, always took cake or pie and we left with all kinds of garden stuff.*

*Once a year, all these baskets of purple hull peas showed up from somewhere, and once again we all sat around shelling them, bagging them up and into the freezer they went.*

*With meat you eat potatoes, right? Well, we never grew potatoes. I guess you could buy them cheap. We were rice farmers, but never ate much rice - - go figure. With our meat and potatoes we ate corn. Not mushy sweet corn - - field corn like you feed livestock - something you can sink your teeth into.*

*We had a hundred acres planted every year on Harkey and 518. When the corn was ripe, the Johnston team went into action. The men picked gunny sacks full of corn and cut the ends off. All of us cousins wee official shuckers, thinking there was no end in sight. The ladies blanched the ears and cut the kernels off the cobs. Bag them up and you guessed it – into the freezer.*

*Another crop was okra (I still hate okra). The previous owners of the land on Harkey grew fields of okra. When our family started growing hay on the land, the okra came up wild in the fence rows. Not letting anything go to waste the okra was picked, packed, and FROZEN.*

*Want some honey for your biscuits? There were several bee hives around. (You don't have to freeze honey). If you like pecans, we had pecan trees; and yes, you can freeze pecans forever.*

*How about some dessert to go with all this? One of our favorites was homemade peach ice cream. And where did the peaches come from? If you guessed the freezer, you are correct. Every couple years, we would travel to Arkansas to visit Mom's family. There was a peach shed nearby where we would load every useable spot in the car with crates of peaches in a non airconditioned car traveling 650 miles.*

*For all you Pearland pear lovers, we did have pears. Sorry, they came from our ranch in Crockett.*

*Oh, a word of caution. A frozen turkey can fall out of an upright freezer and break a leg. Mom was in that cast for a good while.*

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**Editor's Notes:** Many of our members will remember the Johnston family from days past when the one school bus which went west last stop in the morning was to pick up Buck, Gene, Lorraine (Sis) and Tunney Johnston at their home near the corner of Walnut and 518. The Johnston family farmed hundreds of acres along

**Harkey Road and also Garden Road. They are one of the historic old time Pearland families. \* \***  
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*Our congratulations go out to Society Members Willene Tindall and John Joyce who were united in marriage Sunday night, October 8<sup>th</sup> at the First Methodist Church (Cowboy Church). Here's wishing them years of happiness.*

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### **How Times Have Changed**

Many of us can remember the days before computers and relate to these comments.

*Remember When  
Memory was something you lost with age  
An application was for employment  
A program was a TV show  
A cursor used profanity  
A keyboard was a piano  
A web was a spider's home  
A virus was the flu  
A CD was a bank account  
A hard drive was a long trip on the road  
A mouse pad was where a mouse lived*

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**Don't forget our regular quarterly Historical Society meeting Thursday Night, October 20<sup>th</sup> at our Historical Home on Galveston Avenue.**

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

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