

PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pearland Historical Society
P. O. Box 1333
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Dedicated to the preserving the history and heritage of "Old Pearland"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 125th birthday of Pearland was celebrated 9/26/2019. The day started in the Library with speeches and proclamations from the Mayor, Rep. Ed Thompson, the Consul General of Japan and others. Several selected officials were present or sent representatives or video. The just completed documentary was shown and I hope to have it at the next meeting. This was followed by cutting of the birthday cake. Our Society had the Depot open for the day. Not a crowd; but several folks came by to see our display, the outdoor train set, an art exhibit and items from the Sri Meenakshi Temple. The Pearland Community Band ended the day with a concert at the Gazebo. Thanks to all who helped. Hope to see you at the Oct. 19th and especially at the annual Reunion Luncheon on Oct. 26th where we will be honoring the class of 69.

Jerry Johnston, President

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

How the time does fly by! Here it is once again time for our annual **Reunion Luncheon**. This year we will be honoring the graduating class of **1969**. For us really "**old timers**" it is hard to believe the class of **1969** was actually 50 years ago. If you haven't got your ticket yet to the luncheon, please see the reservation form attached to the Newsletter and make your reservation.

Our thanks go out to **Society 2nd Vice President Donald Hays** for all the hard work he did in preparation for **Pearland's 125th Reunion**. If you have not visited the **Society's facebook page** (*Facebook, Pearland Historical Society*) please take time and look and you will learn a lot about **Pearland's** history. Further in the **Newsletter** we will be discussing some of the things on the **Facebook** page.

We will be looking forward to seeing each of you at our luncheon. It is always a lot of fun to visit with old friends you haven't seen in quite awhile and talk about how much **Pearland** has grown and how terrible all the **traffic** is now.

In **1969 Pearland's** population was somewhere around 6000 people. The graduating class of **1969** had somewhere around 100 students. Now we have three high schools with hundreds of graduating students; and our population is now around **125,000** people. Something to talk about at the luncheon.

Another topic I am sure will be discussed is the **125th** anniversary of the founding of **Pearland** which was celebrated **Sept. 26th**. **The Society** had displays in the old depot. **1st Vice President Brenda Riggs** reports that she attended the celebration and took pictures. Note: Pictures are available on our **Historical Society Facebook** page. **Brenda** said she and **President Jerry Johnston and Treasurer Marsha Swensen McDaniel** also manned the **Historical Society** displays at the old depot. **Donald Hays** manned a train display under a tent outside.

Don Hays reported that the celebration and the viewing of the documentary about the old depot was attended by a number of our elected officials and representatives. Commissioner Stacy Adams, District 22 Rep. Ed Thompson, District 129 Rep. Dennis Paul, City Council members Adrian Hernandez, Trent Perez and Luke Orlando. Mayor Tom Reid. The event was emceed by Asst. City Manager Jon Branson. City Manager Clay Deputy Pearson and Assistant City Manager Trent Esperson also attended.

(Editor's Note: I have talked with several people who were quite upset with the City for not publicizing the event any more than they did.)

Don says the event was positively received by the audience (a standing room only crowd in the Pearland Library) The documentary was very positively received by the audience and received a great deal of positive feedback. The depot building was open to the public for the first time in over 10 years and had visitor traffic throughout the day. Also helping were **David McDaniel, Theresa Lukens Riddle and Samantha Hathaway**.

Don reports that we're still actively working on **Restoring the Old Depot**. Support by our members and the community by buying a brick would be very helpful and greatly appreciated. Don reports also that we have had our first grant award: a **\$5,000 grant** from the **Albert & Ethel Herzstein Foundation**.

AMONG OUR MEMBERS

Society member Dwight Bittick continues to receive chemo therapy but looks good and continues to come up to the "**Old Codgers Coffee Club**" from time to time.

Peggy Long has been moved from the **Atria Nursing Home in Friendswood** to a skilled facility in **Clear Lake**.

Society member Carl Talbot continues to take his daily trip to **Alvin** where his wife, **Jenny**, has been for several months now.

Carleen Mark continues to take physical therapy twice a week. She is very weak and short winded as a result from a congestive heart condition.

Fortunately I don't believe we have had any of our members pass away since the last **Newsletter**. At our luncheon we will again have a candle lighting ceremony in honor of **Historical Society** members who have passed away within the last year, and old time **Pearlanders and classs of 69** members who have passed away. I believe we have only had three members pass away. They were **David Smith, Dann Wheelock and Winnie Weaver Borden**.

Some of the familiar old time **Pearlanders** were **Albert Ball, Shirley Cousins, Mark Pridgen, Chris Doyle, Herman Raney, Kyle Lilley and Gene Dair Griffin**.

Editors Note: In the January issue of the Newsletter we had a story about long time Pearlander Herman Raney's passing. We received a letter recently from advising that our story about

Herman did not mention his wife, Rena, as a survivor. We do apologize to Rena and family for this error and thanks go out to John Montgomery for telling us about the error.

We will be discussing the candle lighting at our meeting **Oct. 17th**. Please let us know if we have left anyone out.

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Society Member Florence Jamison Gum celebrated her **95th birthday Sept. 24th**. Florence, who lives in **Lubbock, Texas**, is a **1941 PHS** graduate and is oldest member of our **Historical Society** and the oldest **PHS** grad. **Happy Birthday, Florence.**

Florence has indicated that her daughter will be bringing her to our **Reunion Luncheon**. When you look at pictures of our luncheon last year, you would not believe **Florence** was 94 at that time. Below is a picture from her facebook page. **Florence** looks more like 75 than 95.



Speaking of **Florence's** facebook page, it is a very interesting site. **Florence** has posted pictures from travels she and husband, **Donald Gum**, did while he was still living. There are pictures from trips she and **Don** took practically all over the world. Really

interesting. Looking forward to seeing **Florence** and many more old timers at the luncheon.

As mentioned earlier **Don Hays** did a great job of posting stories about old **Pearland** on our **Facebook** page. One which has drawn a lot of comments is a story about the old corner drugstore run by **Louella and Albert (Smitty) Smith**. Several persons have commented about walking from the school on **Grand Blvd.** to eat lunch at the drugstore. Everyone seems to remember how good the hamburgers were and the cost for a hamburger and milk shake being around 35 cents.



Old Corner Drugstore, corner of 518 and 35.



Carleen Nichols Mark holding Luella Smith's baby. Carleen worked at the drugstore while attending high school.

There are many more pictures and comments on our **Facebook** page. Whenever old timers get together, the old drugstore always is part of the memories shared.

Another story which has had a lot of comments is a story about **Josie Frankengerger Heflin**. **Josie** who lived in the house pictured below on **Main St.** right next to the **Pearland State Bank** was born in **Pearland in 1898 and died in 1999**. She had a amazing amount of old newspaper stories, pictures, etc. which are now in our **Historical Society** home.

Her father was the **postmaster in Pearland** back in **1900**.



Josie's Home



The old oak tree on Main St. next to the bank was planted by Josie and her Mother in remembrance of her Father who passed away in 1927.

The whole story about **Josie** is on our **Facebook** page. She will long be remembered in **Pearland** history.

As mentioned earlier in the **Newsletter** contributions for refurbishing the old depot are still being solicited. The depot, pictured below, will make a great home for our **Historical Society** and is certainly a historical building.



In the first issue of the **Newsletter (June 1994)** we interviewed **Josie** about early days in **Pearland**. **Josie** told about how **Pearlanders** would go to the depot to catch the train (**called the "Bobby Train"**) to go into **Houston** to buy groceries. A grocery shopping day usually was an all day affair riding the train into **Houston** and later back home with a bundle of groceries. **Josie** also spoke of the depot as being a gathering spot where the **Pearlanders** would just go to visit with whoever was waiting in the depot lobby. **Josie**, who was **96** at the time of the interview; had a remarkable memory. Our **Historical Society** should certainly honor **Josie** for all the **Pearland** history she accumulated and gave to the **Historical Society**. Hopefully we will one day have the old depot as our home to display her donations.

In the 3rd issue of the **Newsletter** is an interview with **Lois Hunter Bundy**. The story does not give her age at the time of the interview; but as I recall she was about **98**. **Lois** was the daughter of **Robert Lee and Julia Martin Hunter**, who was the daughter of **Samuel Pleasant Martin**, the man who won a lot in old Pearland for winning a contest as “**the most handsome man in Pearland.**”

Mrs. Bundy also reminisced about the **Pearland** citizens gathering at the old depot to visit or welcome those getting off the “**Bobby Train.**”

She also told about when **WWI** ended in **1918** the whole community met at the old depot to celebrate the ending of the war and then paraded up to the **Old Settlers Cemetery** and had a picnic.

Can you imagine that **Lois and Josie** would have ever imagined that **Pearland** would have a population of **125,000?**

Also in one of the old **Newsletters** was the following quips from **Margie Lawence**. Most of us will agree I feel sure.

To All the Kids Who Survived the 1930's, 40's, 50', 60's and 70's

First we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they were pregnant. They took aspirin, ate blue cheese dressing, tuna from a can and didn't get tested for diabetes!

Then after that trauma, we were put to sleep on our tummies in baby cribs covered with bright colored lead based paint.

We had no childproof lids on the medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets not to mention the risks we took hitchhiking

As infants and children we would ride in cars with no car seats, booster seats, seat belts or air bags. Riding in the back of a pickup on a warm day was always a special treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle. (Editor's Note: The bunch I ran with also drank water out of the creek if we got thirsty enough. Of course we were always cautious and made sure all the cows were downstream.)

We shared our soft drink with four friends from one bottle and no one actually died from this.

We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter and drank Koolaid made with sugar; but we weren't overweight because -----we were always outside playing.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day as long as we were back when the street lights came on. No one was able to reach us all day - - - and we wee o.k.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendos, X-boxes, no video games at all, no cell phones, no personal computers, no internet or chat rooms. We had friends and we went outside and found them.

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth; and there were no lawsuits from those accidents.

We were given BB guns for our 10th birthdays, made up games with sticks and tennis balls and although it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!!!

These generations have produced some of the best risk takers, problem solvers and inventors ever!!

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and rrepnsibility; and we learned how to deal with it all.

**IF YOU ARE ONE OF THEM –
CONTRATULATIONS.**

Margie made many contributions to Newsletters. She was a remarkable lady. She is missed.

Editor's Note: Among the "old codgers coffee group" we often discuss the difference in growing up years ago and today. We all are in agreement that we wouldn't trade those years when we were outside playing every day with today's youth who are inside looking at their I-pads most of the time; and we also talk about how many young people are very obese as compared to our days when you very seldom saw an obese youth.

Speaking of the "old codgers coffee group", here are a few of our favorite old folks hymns:

"Just a Slower Walk with Thee"

"No One Knows the Trouble I have Seeing.

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand --- and Help Me Up."

"Give Me That Old Timers' Religion"

Some more thoughts about comparison to days past today. Several persons have commented about buying hamburgers and a coke for around 35 cents at the **old drugstore**. I have an old bank statement from **July, 1959**. At that time **Carleen** and I were renting a two bedroom house on **Pearland Street**. We had two small sons and had a window air conditioner unit in the living room which cooled the entire house. It was interesting to see the canceled checks on the bank statement:

Houston Lighting and power for the month of July was \$11.50

Water bill: \$6.25

Natural Gas: \$3.00

Telephone: \$4.62

Rent: \$50

We tend to look at those prices and think "those were the "good old days". Of course back in **1959** if you were making **\$400** per month, you had a good job; and the ric were making over **\$10,000** per year and living in **\$25,000** homes you had a very good

job. I imagine that our parents and grandparents back in **1959** were thinking back to prices in 1929 or 30 and moaning about the high cost of living. What do you think our grandkids or great grandkids will be thinking about the cost of living in **2019 in 2069?**

In the last issue of the **Newsletter**, there were several pictures of the old Quonset hut gymnasium sent in by **1st Vice President Brenda Riggs**. Pictures included was one which was the way the gym as it originally looked and several of it being torn down **Brenda** reports that the school district is building two gyms almost side by side where the old gym stood. Apparently one gym is for boys and the other for girls. There is an enclosed walkway between the two gyms; and **Brenda** was very pleased to report that the school district used the flooring from the old gym in the walkway between the new gyms. History preserved . Thanks for the info, **Brenda**.

Don't forget our quarterly Historical Society meeting coming up Thursday night, Oct. 17th at 7:00 P.M at our Historical Society home on Galveston Ave. Cookies, cold drinks, coffee and visitation will follow the meeting.

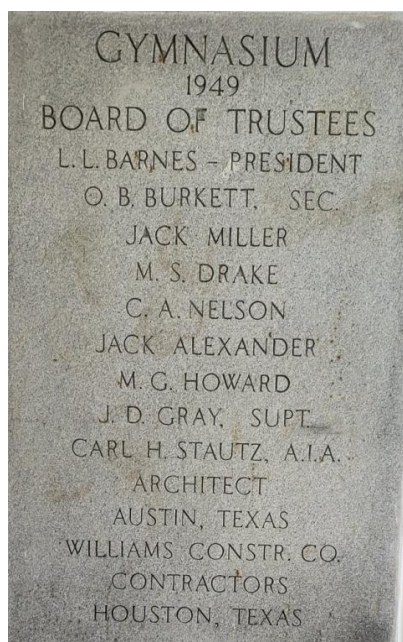
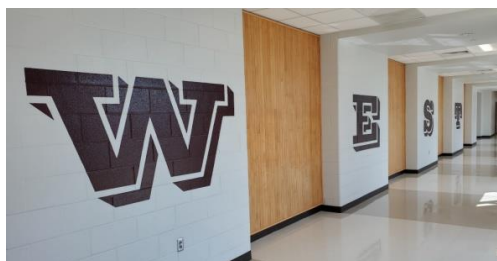
See you there

When a new source of taxation is found it never means, in practice, that the old source is abandoned. It merely means that the politicians have two ways of milking the taxpayer where they had one before.

H. L. Mencken

Tour of PJHW Gym by Brenda Martin Riggs

Toured the 2019 Pearland Jr. High West Gym... Great decision by the Pearland ISD Board of Trustees and Architects – saving the past! The 1949 Quonset Hut gym plaque is displayed; Center Court of the old gym is the flooring between the two new gyms at this facility; and wooden flooring from the old gym was installed intermittently on the walls in the hall!



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 2020:

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