

# 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

Happy **July 4<sup>th</sup>** to everyone. I am writing this message on **Independence Day**. **Carleen** was in the hospital for 9 days; so I got a bit behind schedule and am now writing on **July 4<sup>th</sup>**. Tonight the **Pearland Parks and Recreation Department** will be presenting a **4<sup>th</sup> of July** celebration at **Oiler Stadium**. The celebration always ends with a spectacular fireworks display. How different from the days past when a few days before and a few days after the **4<sup>th</sup> Pearland** sounded as if a war were going on. The old **Pearland Drug Store** sold fireworks, (blackcats, cherry bombs, roman candles, sparklers, etc). It is a wonder we didn't have houses burned down.

Recently our "**old codgers**" coffee group was discussing the difference between the years we were kids and the way it is for kids in this day and time. Further in the **Newsletter**, **Ken Eddings and Alfred Borm** do a little reminiscing about how things were when they were growing up. The one thing that we always recall is the freedoms we had which kids of today do not have. Most of us recall things like getting on the bus and going to **Alvin** to the movies when we were 10 or 11 years old. The consensus among the coffee group was that we were all glad we didn't grow up like the kids of today. True we didn't have air conditioning, video games, computers, I-pads and all the things today's young people have; but when you read comments like **Ken's** it does make you

realize how fortunate we were. We all talk about how we would go outside in the mornings and being outdoors playing all day. There are quite a few young kids on our street; but it is seldom we see any of them outside playing. A few more comments follow **Ken** and **Alfred's** messages.

This doesn't have anything to do with the Historical Society. The **4<sup>th</sup> of July** always brings back some good memories. I hope you all had a great **4<sup>th</sup>**.

**Mickey Mark**

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## What's Happening

Our **Wednesday** night work group continues to peck away at completing a time line of **Pearland** history on one wall of our headquarters and a school history on the opposite wall. **Carl Talbot** does the work on the timeline and **Karen Corron** on the school display. **Ray Kliensing** mans the computer to print out the displays. **Luther Cunningham, Corky Segelquist** and I sit around and provide oral history, jokes, coffee and "remember when" stories. The progress is slow but it is progress. I am reminded of a saying my brother, **Roy Mark**, used when a job looked really big. His saying was "**what's hard by the yard is a cinch by the inch.**" So we are inching along; but a lot

has been done. Take a look at our meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>.



**Pearland History Timeline**



**Portion of Pearland School History**

Also when you come to the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> take a look at the exterior of our building. **Matt Duke**, nephew of **Society Member Phil Amick**, volunteered for his **Eagle Scout** project to lead his **Scout Troop 404** on a project to refurbish the exterior of the building. The **Scouts** patched concrete, removed mold, and repainted the pylons, as well as adding planters and a bench to the entryway to brighten up this area. **Matt Duke** is a junior at **Friendswood High School**. Pictured below is the group which worked May 3 and 4 to complete this project. Working with **Matt** were **Vincent Cade, Jonnathan Delgado, Chaitanyu Lavu, Arun Rao, Rahul Popat, Ben McGee, Joshua Schurz, Ashish Dave, Matt Rohren, Kyle Lin, Taylor Brown,**

**Faith Van Noppen Stapleton, Lee McGee, Prasad Lavu, Phil Amick, Scott Duke, Liz Duke, John Owen, and Kyle Swan, also Taylor Brown and Tony Nicosia.** Our thanks go out to **Matt** and his fellow scouts.



On **May 18<sup>th</sup>**, the **Brazoria County Historical Museum** presented a program called "**Historical Brick and Beams**", which included a presentation made by the **Pearland Historical Society** about the old **1937 Pearland High School**. Our presentation gave the history of the schools in **Pearland** explaining how a brand new two story brick school built in 1912 for \$6000 had the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor blown away by a storm in 1915. Thereafter **Pearland** high school students had to attend school in **Webster** until the new school was built in **1937**. Attending the program were **Mickey Mark, Luther Cunningham, Carl Talbot, and Corky Segelquist.**

Invitations have been sent to members of the **PHS** class of **1963** who will be the honored guests at our annual reunion luncheon **Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>**. Invitations were sent to **Mike Bennett, Doris Blumer Fontaine, Henrietta Canales Gonzalez, Jerry Carlisle, Sheila Coppinger Polk, Cleo Dugie, Cathryne Ann Ferri Drummond, George Green, David Griffin, Patricia Grimes Prosin, Linda Hill Samford, Michael Hillhouse, Stanley Honeycutt, Ronnie Johnson, Gene Kliesing, Tommy Kliesing, Tony Lively, Patty**

**McGlathery Crawford, Jennie Miller, Rowan, E. R. Milstead, Janelle Moody Arcemant, Jack Nelson, Sharon Pledger Murdock, Willie Rains, Linda Raney Saffle, Sylvia Robles DeLeon, Lupe Ruiz Meza, Kenneth Voiles, Linda Wells Keeton**

Hopefully we will have another good response as we did last year from the class of 1962.

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### Among our Members

**D. K. Baker**, husband of **Society Member Joan Baker**, passed away **July 7<sup>th</sup>** after a long illness. **Joan**, owner of **Joan's Beauty Shop**, oldest continuous business in "old Pearland" cared for **D. K.** during his illness for quite a long time before his passing. Our deepest sympathies go out to **Joan** and family.

We also lost some long time area residents who were not **Society** members.

Although he wasn't living in **Pearland**, **Jack Tharp**, **1947 PHS** graduate kept his ties here. He and his wife, **Dorothy**, were regular attendees at the **First Methodist Church** and kept an interest in **Pearland** activities. **Jack** passed away **April 15<sup>th</sup>**. Those of us who knew **Jack** will always remember him as a fun guy. He will be missed.

On **April 18<sup>th</sup>** **Wayne Livesay**, **PHS 1958** grad, passed away in **Cushing, Texas**. The **Livesay** family is one of the pioneer **Pearland** families. **Wayne's** grandparents, **Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Livesay**, came to **Pearland** in the early **1900's** opening up a livery stable and the historic **Livesay Store** in **1906**. They are buried in the "Old Settlers Cemetery".



**Livesay Store approx. 1906 at corner of Main and Broadway**

Longtime **Pearland** resident, **Mrs Flora Reyes Milstead** passed away **June 10<sup>th</sup>** at the age of 98. She is survived by children **Josephine Milstead Cantu, Joe, Mike, Manuel, E. R. and Douglas Milstead**. Our sympathies go out to all the **Milstead** family.

In the **April** issue of the **Newsletter** we advised that **Society Member Evelyn Martin Lawhon** was in an assisted living facility in **Georgetown, Texas**. **Evelyn** is now in **Colonial Oaks Assisted Living, 2940 Cullen Boulevard, Pearland**. She is in room 213. Thanks to **Society Member Brenda Martin Riggs**, we have a list of other longtime **Pearlanders** who are also at **Colonial Oaks**. They are: **Basil Cogbill (room 211), R. C. and Edith Grimes (room 232), Lou Heinrich (room 122), Wanda Jamison (room 234), Claudia Martin (room 290), and Lorraine Smith (room 109)**. As **Brenda** says in her e-mail, if you are in the area we are sure they would all appreciate a visit.

Also in the **April Newsletter** we reported members **Sid Kliesing** and **Juanita Stone Sutherland** both being hospitalized. **Sid** went in with bleeding in the brain and **Juanita** with a shattered ankle from a car wreck. It is great to report that both are now doing well. I understand **Sid** is not driving yet but is jumping on his bicycle to go to his son's house nearby.

It is also good to report that **Armilda Nichols Hall** is doing well after having surgery **January 31<sup>st</sup>** to repair torn shoulder ligaments.

**Carleen Nichols Mark** went into **Clear Lake Heart Center** on **June 22<sup>nd</sup>** with atrial fibrillation (racing heartbeat); and underwent surgery to implant a pacemaker on **June 27<sup>th</sup>**. She suffered complications when it was discovered the area between the chest wall and the lung had been slightly perforated during the surgery letting air in that area. Another surgery was performed to put a tube into the chest wall to aspirate the air from the chest wall. She was able to come home **June 30<sup>th</sup>**, but is still very weak but recovering.

**Society member Carolyn Garner McCoy** advises that long time **Pearlanders, Leon Garner** and **Jay Johnson** both have been in **M. D. Anderson** for cancer treatment.

Please keep all of our members and long time **Pearlanders** who are going through rough physical times in your prayers.

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### Can Anyone Top This?

In the last issue of the **Newsletter** we reported that **Society Member David Smith** had just become a great grandfather for the 16<sup>th</sup> time when **Ann Marie Bateman** was born. The question was raised if any of our members had more than 16 great grandchildren. **Jackie Martin** informs us that **Society Member Claudia Martin**, mother of **Brenda Riggs, Charldene Porter, Sandra Scott, Cookie Edwards**, and the late **Buddy Martin**, has twenty two great grandkids. Additionally, she has four great-great-grandkids.

(Editor's Note: Is this a record?)



**Claudia Martin with Granddaughter Laura Martin Vuittonet at one of our Reunion Luncheons**



**This picture is from our Historical Society files. It is Roy "Dude" Martin in front of the old "Wander Tavern" which was part of Kliesing Motor Company on Main St. On the horse behind Dude are Charldene, Sandra and Brenda Martin.**

Most everyone knows **David Scott** at 93 is the oldest native born male **Pearlander**. We really don't know at this time who is the oldest native born female **Pearlander**. Any nominations? What we really do know; and there is no doubt about it, is that **Mary Lee Miller** is the oldest living **Pearlander** and the oldest **Historical Society** member. **Mary Lee** will be **103** years old on **August 22<sup>nd</sup>**. In one of the very early editions of the **Newsletter**, **Mary Lee** was interviewed; and one of her comments still sticks with me. She said that when she and husband **Jack Miller** built their home on the corner of **Austin and Orange Streets** back in the 30's, they were way out in the country!!!! For newcomers that would be hard to visualize. Here's wishing **Mary Lee** a very happy **103<sup>rd</sup>** birthday on **August 22<sup>nd</sup>**.



**Mary Lee Miller**

The following is a copy of an e-mail received from **Society Member Ken Eddings** with a list of memories about growing up in **Pearland**.

*“Mickey, the following are some warm memories I recollect about life growing up in Pearland.*

*Traveling to the Alvin theatre via bus .  
Swimming in the canals by the highway to Manvel, at times having to walk or hitchhike back to Pearland, usually to the Pearland Drug Store for a really welcome*

*cold frosted root beer.*

*Riding your bicycle on the shell streets in Pearland. Fairly risky, as I can attest to.  
Attending dances in the summertime at Alvin Community College.*

*Traveling to Alvin or Pasadena on Sunday afternoons to swim in their swimming pools.  
Working with Mr. Best as a welder's helper, sometimes perched 30 feet above a concrete hangar floor at the Pearland airport with no safety gear.*

*Riding with others in a car driven by Glen Stone, going 100 miles an hour on Hwy 35(Airport Road) near Hobby Airport.*

*Enduring extremely bad fog nights, at times during a football game when the ball was punted it was anybody's guess where it would come down.*

*Playing Junior High football barefooted.(Ouch!)*

*Playing High School football on some fields with grass burrs. (Hempstead and Klein)*

*Eating at the famous San Jacinto Inn for the Junior-Senior banquets. A favorite spot.*

*Traveling to Sugarland for either football or basketball games and eating chicken fried steak at White's Cafe. Another favorite spot.*

*Coach Ralph Segers taking guys each year to the State basketball championships in Austin.*

*Coach Segers was my junior high softball, football, and basketball coach, and also my math teach in high school.*

*The Van Vleck high school basketball team sitting down on the floor during a district game in Pearland, ordered by their coach because he thought he was getting bad calls by the referee.*

*Traveling to Friendswood on a cold cloudy morning to watch my one and only six man football game. Cold Springs beat Friendswood.*

*The boys Travel Club traveling to New Orleans via the School bus on old Highway 90 before I-10 was built.*

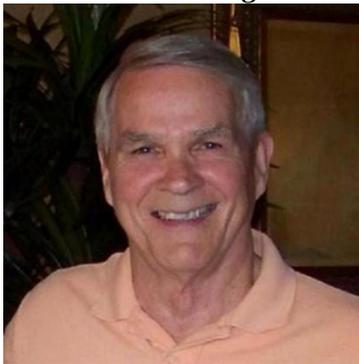
*Traveling to Lake Texoma the following year, also on the school bus. Jimmy Nelson brought his boat and motor and there were a few sun burns that occurred.*

*Gathering at Sonny Huft's house on Friday nights to watch wrestling. He was one of the*

*few households that had a TV in town.  
Breathing the mosquito spray fumes that were  
forever being sprayed around town by trucks.  
A necessary evil!  
Learning to roller skate at the traveling roller  
rink that set on the corner of I=35 and FM-  
518.  
Enjoying the annual Halloween Bazaar that  
was set up inside and outside at the old gym.  
Trying to hit the bullseye to dunk Coach  
Backhaus.  
Standing out front of the Pearland Drug Store  
on a Sunday afternoon, watching the cars go  
by.  
Traveling to the annual county fair in  
Angelton and enjoying some of the best BBQ  
ever.  
Placing pennies on the railroad tracks to see  
the damage it would do.  
Attending Standolind Oil Co's annual  
barbecue at Hastings with my cousin Bryant.*

*And finally Mickey, some forgotten  
information.  
Everyone from way back remembers the great  
1950 football team that went all the way to  
regionals, which is as far as you could advance  
back then for a Class B football team.  
However, that same year the junior high  
football team also won district, beating Deer  
Park. Some of the guys on that team were  
Leon and Larry Garner,  
Larry Gaidosek, Weldon Flanakin, Robert  
Carter, Bryant Tindall, and myself. Coach  
Ralph Segers was our coach.”*

*Ken Eddings*



(Editor’s Note) Thanks for the memories, Ken. Your story further illustrates my opening comments about the difference in growing up back then and growing up now. You don’t say, Ken, but I would wager everything I own that you weren’t wearing a helmet when you were bicycling on Pearland’s shell roads. In today’s world, your parents would probably be visited by Children’s Protective Services if they let you do the things all the kids did back in those days. One final comment. I recently read a story in the Wall Street Journal entitled “When Summer Was Easy.” The headline read “In rural America, the long hot months used to mean books, bible school, high dives and war games. Our times are safer - - and less fun.” One thing that really caught my eye was a statement saying that in the “early 60’s thirteen percent of the populace were obese and today it is thirty six percent.”

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Another e-mail about memories of earlier days in **Pearland** was received from **Society Member Alfred Borm** with memories prompted by the story in the last **Newsletter** about the “golf ball” water tower. **Alfred’s** comments are below:

*I was interested to read when the "golf ball" water tank was built, because I remember watching it go up. That was my first year in Pearland schools, eighth grade. I remember feeling glad that I wasn't going to have to paint that sucker.*

*I saw the tank being built mainly because I often walked down to the Drug Store for lunch. Carleen fixed great burgers, which I think cost a quarter. At that time in my life there was something about a fountain Coke with a squirt of vanilla syrup in it that touched my very soul. The Drug Store had tall glass straw holders on the counter. You pulled up the lid and the straws came up so you could*

*grab one. No nonsense about individually wrapped straws in those innocent times. My buddy, Homer Winder, and I thought it was really hilarious eighth-grade humor, when our drinks were done, to blow out our straws and then put them back into the holder! Guess we were the original recyclers.*



**Mary and Alfred Borm**

Thanks, **Ken** and **Alfred** for the memories. If any of you have special memories about growing up in old **Pearland**, please e-mail them and share them with other readers.

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Still talking about the old golf ball water tower, **Society Member Tom Hunter** sometime back sent several pictures taken in **1972** from the top of the tower by **Harry Thompson**, a **1965 PHS** grad who passed away **March 9<sup>th</sup>**. Several of the pictures have been incorporated into the historical timeline **Carl Talbot** is putting together. Here is what **Pearland** looked like in **1972** from the top of the water tower.



This first picture is looking east at Main Street with Mrs. Cunningham's home and kindergarten in the foreground. Across the street looking east is the Pearland State Bank. In the background is the home of Edwin and Peggy Long.



Another picture of Pearland State Bank with Long house in background. Also visible is the steeple of the old Methodist Church on Houston Ave.

## A Bit of Interesting Trivia

Society Member **Ray Kliesing** reported that the following information about the **Texas City** explosion of **1947** was posted on **Facebook** by **Danny Dimmitt**, grandson of **Joe Saffle** who was superintendent of **South Park Cemetery** for many years.

*“Grandpa Saffle "Pop" was superintendent of South Park Cemetery then and he tells of being asked to bury thousands of human body parts that were never identified from the blast, He had his men dig a long trench in the back of the cemetery just off the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. In the cover of darkness several trucks loaded with parts in some sort of coverings arrived at South Park and were offloaded and buried there. A preacher delivered a prayer and the remains were covered, without fanfare or announcements.”*

Has anyone ever heard that before?

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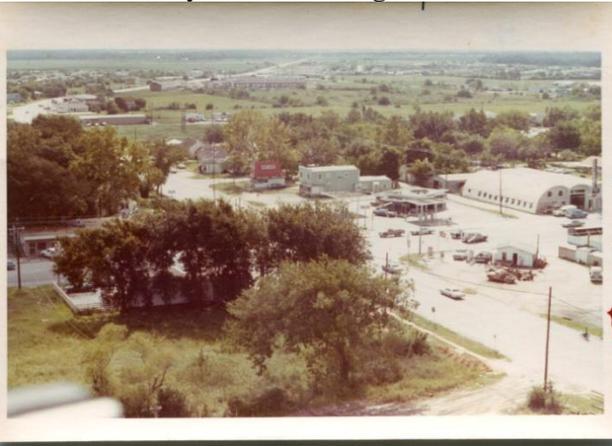
**Be sure to make your plans to attend our annual Historical Society Reunion Luncheon on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. Class of 1963 will be honored.**

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**Don't forget our quarterly meeting Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. in the Historical Society building on Galveston St. Home made cookies, coffee, cold drinks and visitation follow the meeting.**



This picture is looking north along the railroad with the rice dryer in the background.



This picture shows the intersection of Hwy 35 and 518 in 1972. Kliesing Motor Co. and old two story building where Pearland Bank started are in view.



This picture is looking south toward Alvin. Old Pearland airport is in backbround. Notice Walnut St. does not cross Highway 35 at that time.