

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

As most of you are aware we are now having our **Historical Society** meetings every two months on the **3rd Tuesday** night instead of once a quarter. Our next meeting will be **May 20th** However, the **Newsletter** will continue to come out on a quarterly basis during the first month of each quarter.

Recently **Margurite Massey Smith's** daughter, **Lois Smith Sommers**, presented our **Historical Society** with a packet of historical documents **Margurite** had researched over the years **1996** through **2003**. Further in the **Newsletter**, we have listed the documents. In future **Newsletters**, we will posting some interesting history **Margurite** preserved.

In the article below we mention that **Karen Corron** will be working on a display on the wall of our **Historical Society** headquarters about old time **Pearland** families for whom streets have been named. Most of us long time **Pearlanders** back in the **30's** and **40's** never knew the names of the streets. There were no street signs and directions would be go by so and so's house or turn at the post office, etc.

Don't forget our next meeting will be **May 20th**. Hope to see you there.

Mickey Mark

What's Happening

Our **Wednesday** night work group continues to meet and make progress on the **Pearland Historical** timeline. **Karen Corron** has completed the **Pearland** school history section on the east wall of our main meeting room. Her next project will be a section about old time **Pearland** families for whom many of our streets are named – i.e. **Knapp Road, Scott Lane, Yost Road, O'Day Road, Hatfield Road**, etc.

On Saturday, **May 3rd**, the **Texas Historical Marker** for "**Hunter Park**" will be unveiled with a ceremony which begins at **10:00 A.M.** We will be sending out e-mail notices which will give more information about the program.

For those of you into searching the internet, please take a look at the **Pearland Historical Society Facebook** page which **Ray Kliesing** set up for us and where **David DeHoyas** has posted a large number of old **Pearland** pictures. It is an interesting website.

Thanks to **Brenda Martin Riggs** we have mailing addresses for members of the graduating **PHS class of 1964**, which is the honored class for our **Reunion Luncheon** this fall. Invitations will soon go out to those members. Further in the **Newsletter** will be names of graduates we have addresses, names of

and those we still need addresses and names of those who have passed away.

Among Our Members

It is always nice to report that we have not had any of our members pass away since the last **Newsletter**. However it is sad to report several longtime **Pearlanders** have passed away.

We were saddened to learn that **Lola Mae Long** passed away in **mid-February**. **Lola** was a **1946 PHS** graduate and a member of the long time **Pearland Long** family. Many of our members will remember **Lola's** friendly greetings when they went to **Wal-Mart** where the **Pearland** school administration building now stands.

Jennie Marie Leazer, who was a longtime **Pearland** resident until **2004** passed away **March 1st in Orange Park, Fl.** **Jennie** was declared "Woman of the Year" in **2001** by "Bay Area Women of Faith and Values." She was active in the local **Eastern Stars** and many local charity organizations.

1956 PHS grad Edward Voiles passed away **March 1st in Huntsville, Tx.** **Edward** was a member of the **PHS** baseball team as well as playing for a short time with the old **Pearland** town team. Those who knew **Edward** also remember him as a great guy.

Marilyn Howard Johns, **PHS class of 1958** passed away **April 12th**. She was preceded in death by her parents, **Gay and Marguerite Howard**, daughter **Carol Lynn Johns** and twin sister **Carolyn Howard Scott**. She is survived by her husband, **Clarence Johns**, son **David Johns** and wife **Cathy**, brother **Milton Wayne Howard**, sister **Betty Howard Burrus**, granddaughter **Alyssa Yarrington** and husband **Ryan**; grandson, **Jeremy Johns**; great-granddaughter, **Emery Yarrington**; mother-in-law, **Mildred Johns**; and numerous

nieces and nephews. Many of our members will remember the **Howard** home being where the **Pearland Bank Parking** lot now is on **Houston Ave.** and will also remember **Marguerite** teaching **Sunday School** class for the **Methodist Church** in her living room. Our sympathies go out to all the **Howard** and **Johns** families.

Some of our members have been going through some rough times healthwise. In early **March** my brother, **Society Member Roy Mark of Victoria** suffered a stroke and a small heart attack. **Roy**, a **1943 PHS grad**, attended our luncheon last **October**. After spending several days in the trauma unit of a hospital in **San Antonio**, he is now in a nursing home in **Pleasanton, Texas** near the home of his daughter **Glenda Martin**. He is conversant and mobile and improving but still has a long way to go. His wife, **JoAnn**, is also in the nursing home there in **Pleasanton**. She is slowly returning to fairly good health. Please keep **Roy and JoAnn** in your prayers.



1943 PHS Classmates Roy Mark (L.) and David Smith at reunion luncheon last fall.

Society Member Bill Bradley has been going through some difficult health problems. His daughter, **Carolyn Collmorgan** reports that **Bill**, who turned **96** last **December 8th**, has been in and out of the **Emergency Room** starting in **March** with problems with his gall bladder. Keep **Bill** and his family in your prayers.

Also please keep in your prayers our members and old time **Pearlanders** who are in the nursing homes in this area. They include **Herbert Jamison, Evelyn Martin Lawhon, Claudia Martin, Basil Cogbill, Wanda Nichols and Louise Haskins Wisely.** .

On the bright side, two of our members celebrated historical birthdays in **March**. **Claudia Martin** turned **95 on March 3rd** and **Veora Hunter** turned **90 on March 4th**. Also **Margie Lawrence** turned **93 on March 27th**. *Happy birthdays, ladies.*



Claudia Martin with daughter Brenda Martin Riggs (L.) and granddaughter Laura Martin (daughter of Buddy Martin



Veora Hunter (right) with daughter Carol
At one of our reunion luncheons.



Margie Lawrence (R.) with Peggy Farthing Long
Pictures from Reunion Luncheon Last Fall.
Class of 1964

As mentioned earlier, **Brenda Martin Riggs** furnished a list of members of the honored class of **1964**. Invitations to the luncheon will be mailed to each member for whom we have addresses about the first of **June**. Here is the list of members:

David Abbott; Harriet Alexander Holmes; Betty Benes Hill; Roger Bailey; Barbara Bennett Dalke, Doris Bishop Nunnery; Kathy Borm; Marty Bratton; Barbara Brocker Stewart; Ronny Burkett; Martha Caballero Speller; Sue Carlisle Toney; Jennifer Lou Carlisle Lundstrom; Kathleen Childress Holt; Peggy Cogbill Dethloff; Glenda Jean Ellis Walker; Gloria Ferrier; Elias Garcia; Lupe Garcia; Derrel Garner; Frank Gonzales; Cathy Green Taylor; James Griffin; Johnnie Hall; Marilyn Harris Bullard; Martha Harris Salyer; Ronnie Harpole; Lloyd Hawkins, Elizabeth Holden; Beth Hudson Diestler; Kay Lane Waggoner; Tommy Leared; Becky Louden Hennessey; Terry McGowan; Judy Meade Hodge; Peggy Miller Hall; Michael Ray Moser; Tony Ponce; James Porter; Gary Prensner; Helen Ruize Simental; Tammy Shea Miller; Wayne Stallings; Tammy Sullender Wells; Bobby Thompson; Buddy Watson; Mike Watson; Kay Watts Chapman; Jim Wells; Floyd Whitehouse; David Williams; Wayne Wilson, Carolyn Yost.

Deceased Members are: Gary Arnold (passed away 02/09/1981; Ray Bell – June 30, 2012; James Kagy, Oct. 6, 1980; Conrad Wayne Kowis – Oct. 17, 1994; Bonnie Stark Mobley – Oct. 18, 1971; Andy Nelson – Sept. 08, 1982; George Olin – Jan. 1, 2002; Wayne Rains – Dec. 15, 2006.

We still need addresses for the following: **Roger Bailey; Marty Bratton; Gloria Ferrier; Elizabeth Holden; Tommy Leared; Michael Moser; Tony Ponce; David Williams**

If you have addresses for any of these class members, please let us know.

A little more on 64

For us long time **Pearlanders** who have followed **Oiler** sports, the class of **1964** is well remembered as a group of outstanding athletes. Quite a number of the 64 group will remember playing little league ball on **Zychlinski Park** when little league was first formed in **1957**. In those early years there were about 44 to 50 boys ages 9 through 12 who signed up for teams. All the names were put into a hat according to ages. Then each manager (4 teams) would draw a name out of a hat. The managers had to play with whom they drew. What we have often talked about is what a really good group of ball players were in that first group. Later in high school that same group of athletes were the backbone of some really good **Oiler** football teams. Those who immediately come to mind are **Wayne Rains, Ronnie Burkett, Bobby Thompson, James Porter, Gary Prensner, and Lloyd Hawkins.**

Through the years the **Oilers** have had some great running backs, particularly in the years since **Coach Tony Heath** has been here. Many of us who have watched **PHS** football all through the years feel that **Wayne Rains** was right at the top of the list. He was a 9.8 hundred yard dash sprinter who was really hard to tackle once he got going. **Wayne** had a scholarship to the **University of Houston** but unfortunately tore his knee up before he could play

varsity football. At that time freshmen were not allowed to play varsity. **U of H Coach Bill Yoeman** once commented to **J. C. Nichols** that **Wayne Rains** had the most potential of any running back he had ever recruited. The class of **64** was pretty special when it came to sports.

Recently **Margurite Massey Smith's** daughter, **Lois Smith Sommers**, presented us with a large packet containing 8 smaller packets of historical information **Margurite** had put together for eight different **Pearland** historical occasions. On the cover letter with the packet which is titled "**Preservation of Pearland History**" is a list of subjects each packet is about. The following is a copy from her letter:

1. Santa Fe Railroad, the depot, Mark Belt from Charter to demise. Has historical marker.

2. Cemetery. Old Settlers has historical marker.

(Editor's Note: Included in this packet is the great book "**Old Settlers Cemetery**" which **Diane Kropp** put together in **1986**.)

3. Methodist Church – its beginning with history – has historical marker.

4. Suburban Gardens Hotel – Built in 1911 by E. G. Miller and wife Maude. How it came to be and expanded to 23 rooms when Mr. Miller's mother, Mrs Bush, came to live with them. Allison and Richey "Garden of Eden". Much information plus the sale to Baptist Church.

5. Authentic maps of Pearland – completed by Mike Wilson of then Walsh Engineering. In detail. Beautifully done.

6. Historical Reads and Massey Highway (historical route)

7. 1937 Pearland High School – how it came to be plus historical marker.

Looking Back

8. Zychlinski Park: Has historical marker.

(Editor’s note: **Margurite** goes into detail the problems encountered with our efforts to get the park returned after the school sold it to **Alvin Community College**.)

Margurite says the eight packets of history were completed from **1996 to December, 2003**. She also states that the map hanging in **City Hall** is correct in every detail and is supported by everything it says with deeds and documents.

The eight packets will certainly give our **Weds. Night** work group a wealth of information about **Pearland** history to go through and read.

Margurite dedicated a large part of her life to recording the history of her beloved **Pearland**. Her contributions will be on record and remembered in years to come when those of us who can remember much of her history are no longer around. You will be reading some of the information she recorded in future **Newsletters**.



Margurite Massey Smith and Mayor Tom Reid at Zychlinski Park dedication 2007

A group of us older (not old) guys get together most mornings for coffee and to discuss affairs of the world. **Society 1st V.P. Luther Cunningham** is usually there daily and serves as unofficial **chairman of the board.** Other **Society** members there on a regular basis are **Carl Talbot, Nolen West, Dwight Bittick, Jack McGuff and myself.** Most days there will be other old timers who are not members of the **Historical Society** but who stay abreast of activities in **Pearland** and the **USA**. A topic which often comes up is the changing of our country; and most agree that the **WWII** generation, which **Tom Brokaw** called the “**greatest generation**”, really was the “**greatest generation**”. We remember how during the war, the **USA** was totally united in the effort to help our young men in the military in any way possible. We had food rationing, gasoline rationing, and shortages of all sorts; but no one complained because we all knew it was for the national good. Those of us in school here in **Pearland** recall meeting in the school yard every morning and reciting the pledge of allegiance as the **American** flag was being raised. We bought “war savings stamps” at 10 cents or 25 cents apiece to paste in a book until we had \$18.75 to pay for a \$25 war savings bond.

When the **Japanese** bombed **Pearl Harbor** in **1941**, **Pearland** probably had a population somewhere around 360 people. During the period from the start of the war on **December 7, 1941** to the surrender of the **Japanese** on August 15, 1945 **Pearland** had **132** young area men in the service of our country. **Nine** young **Pearlanders** sacrificed their lives for our country.

Today, according to **USA Today**, we are losing **WWII** veterans at the rate of **600** per day. In looking over our **Historical Society** membership roster, the members listed below served our country during the days of **WWII**:

Herbert Jamison, Charles Logan, Mayor Tom Reid, David Scott and Arnold Watson

The following two stories brought about the reminiscing about the “greatest generation”.

Arnold Watson Appointed a “Chevalier” of the French Legion of Honor

Last **July Pearland Historical Society** member and **WWII veteran Arnold Watson** received a letter from the **Ambassador of France** advising that he had been appointed a “**Chevalier**” of the **Legion of Honor** as a sign of **France’s** gratitude of **Arnold’s** “personal and precious” contribution to the role of the **United States** in the liberation of their country during **World War II**.

The **Legion of Honor** was created by **Napoleon** in 1802 to acknowledge services rendered to France by persons of exceptional merit. The letter goes on to state “the **French** people will never forget your courage and your devotion to the great cause of freedom”

U. S. veterans who receive the **Legion of Honor** must have fought in one of the main campaigns of the liberation of **France: Normandy, Provence or Northern France**.

Some of you may have read about this honor being bestowed on **Arnold**. I think it was in the papers last fall. I believe the **Pearland Journal** had a story in a **November** edition. Not only was **Arnold** a veteran of campaigns in **North Africa, Sicily** and others, he was also a part of the most famous battle of **WWII: “Operation Overlord, on Omaha Beach” in Normandy, France**. That is the battle we all remember as “**D Day**.”

According to the news article, **Arnold** was raised in the **Boling, Texas** area. He joined the **Army** in **1939** going to **Fort Sam Houston** for basic training. At **Fort Sam** he knew “**Ike**” **Eisenhower** when “**Ike**” was a **major**. **George Patton** was a **Lt. Colonel**. **Arnold** fought in several battles across the **French** countryside with famous names such as **St. Lo** and **St. Mere Eglise**.

At the war’s end, **Arnold** enlisted in the **Air Force** and remained in service until **1950**. He continued to serve as a **deputy sheriff, a judge and the first Chief of Police for the City of Brookside Village**.

Thank you, **Arnold**, for your service. We are all happy you were finally recognized for your contribution to the freedom of **France**.



Arnold Watson

Society Member Florence Jamison Gum, PHS grad of **1941**, sent a copy of a story which appeared in the **Lubbock Avalanche Journal** about her husband **Don Gum’s** service in the **U. S. Marine Corps**. From **1941 – 1949**. The story is reprinted below.



*By Ray Westbrook
A-J MEDIA*

Donald A. Gum, who enlisted in the Marine Corps at Houston before Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese, now spends time each day in an easy

chair in his Lubbock home. Florence, his wife since 1946, explains that he has a hearing limitation that isn't entirely corrected by a hearing aid. That may partially explain why he sometimes looks vacantly across the room until someone touches a nerve about his loyalty to the corps.

Aside from personal medals he was awarded, and a spur taken from the boot of a dead Japanese officer, Gum doesn't have many mementos of World War II — just snapshots of memories of the Pacific islands he helped take back from the enemy. "I went to Tarawa, Okinawa and Guadalcanal," he said of his service. Of the invasions, he said, "It was landing on the beach, crawling in the sand and fighting with a rifle." The men were brought to shore in a landing craft. "You had about 20 men in there, and when it hit the beach, the front dropped out, and you never knew what was waiting for you."

But early in an interview, Gum pauses to make a distinction between a soldier and a Marine. "You need to realize that Marines don't like to be called soldiers," he said, explaining that it sounds too much like the Army. Friends from church, Charles and Linda Kinman, also are aware of the distinction, and Linda uses it as a good-natured way to get a spirited response. "I bake him cookies because he has a dental problem, and he likes homemade cookies. I take the cookies in, and if he's kind of dozing or not paying attention, I just walk up and give him a hug and say, 'Hey, how's my good old Army buddy today?' "He straightens up in that chair the best he can, and he will say, 'Woman, I'll have you know I am a former Marine.' And I say, 'I'm just checking on you to see if you're paying attention.' "

According to Charles Kinman, who is a history buff, the United States was pouring supplies into Britain to keep that country from falling to the Germans at the start of the war, and the effect reached all the way to Gum's unit. Kinman said, "He told me that when they first got there, they

still had World War I helmets, and they didn't have the M-1 rifles — they had the 1903s."

Gum said, "I was in the 1st Battalion, 29th Marines." Later, he was part of the newly formed 6th Marine Division. "We didn't leave any Marines behind," he said. "We went back and brought all the ones that were down." He adds, "We were bringing those Japanese out, too. Of course, some of them got shot." He remembers, "Some of the Japanese surrendered. Finally they all did, those remaining. They came out with their hands up, and we took them to encampment." The enemy soldiers had been dislodged from bunkers largely by explosives, according to Gum. "It was grenades and rockets."

There was danger, also. Gum remembers once diving into a crater made by a large artillery shell, only to find a dead horse lying beside him. It was evidence that the Japanese officers, at least, had horses at the start of the war. "I don't remember which island that was," he said of the incident that occurred almost 70 years ago.

Gum does remember that he spent two years on the picturesque island of American Samoa during his service time. And he was one of the privileged few to be able to listen regularly to the broadcasts of Tokyo Rose, a propagandist for Japan. "She would get on your radio circuit and broadcast, telling you that your girlfriends were running around with other boys, and all that kind of stuff. The Marines didn't believe anything she said — at least I didn't."

In 1945, he reenlisted and was sent to China to guard railways from the communists that were in process of taking over the country. He left China in January 1946, and was attempting to get home to see his father, who was dying. But the trip took a month, and he wasn't in time to see him again. Donald and Florence married after he returned to Houston, and in November 2013 celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary. He began working in sales, then wound up in Lubbock where he worked

at Hesters Office Supply. Later, he worked 20 for Southwestern Public Service before retiring.



Sgt. Don Gum, U.S. Marines 1943

When Gum looks back across a lifetime, he remembers that he graduated from Reagan High School and went for three semesters to the Houston Conservatory of Music, majoring in music theory with a minor in piano and voice. There is no indication he ever sang in the Marine Choir, but until recently he sang regularly in the choir at Westminster Presbyterian church. Now, in his chair, he may seem to be looking across the room, but he is seeing the island of American Samoa, his bride from 1946, the family they raised, and the dress uniform of a U.S. Marine



Florence & Don Gum

Editors Note: We all owe so much to those like **Arnold and Don**. We would all hope that if our country faced the same kind of situation, we would respond as did those of “**the greatest generation**”.

After a long wait the new **H.E.B.** store on **Pearland Parkway** is opening **April 16th**. If you go into **H.E.B.** take a look around to see if some “**old Pearland**” pictures are on the wall. **H.E.B.** asked our **Historical Society** for some “**old Pearland**” pictures so they could enlarge them to poster size and display them in the store. We are anxious to see which pictures they used. This is probably not a picture they will use but it is a picture which brings out a lot of memories among our members. It is a picture of **Society Member Nolen West** on the right with a person not known standing in front of the old corner drugstore. Whenever old time **Pearlanders** get together, the old drugstore always come up in the conversation.



Don't forget the next meeting of our Historical Society is Tuesday, May 20th, at our Historical Society site at 7:00 P.M. Cookies, coffee, cold drinks and visitation follow the meeting. See you there

