August, 2017

Evelyn Garland, Editor dpgar-

August 31st Speaker

Mark Keehn

“History of the National Weather Service Radar in League City

Mark Keehn has been the Information Technology Officer for the Houston/Galveston National Weather Service (NWS) office in League City since 2002. His primary job is administering the IT resources for the office. However, his background is in meteorology so he still works occasional forecasting shifts in order to remain proficient as a meteorologist and to evaluate the computer systems from a user's perspective.

Previously, Mark worked as a techniques development meteorologist from 1994 to 2002 for the NWS Spaceflight Meteorology Group (SMG) at NASA's Johnson Space Center. At SMG, he introduced new technology and meteorological concepts in to the forecast operations and assisted the lead forecasters with providing weather support for the space shuttle program.

Prior to SMG, Mark was a meteorologist intern from 1990 to 1994 at the Brownsville NWS office.

Mark is a 1989 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Asheville with a degree in atmospheric sciences.
Proposed By Laws change....

Change to Historical Society’s Bylaws, submitted by Katie Benoit Hake and Susan Pierce:

At the August meeting of the Historical Society, the following change to the Society’s bylaws will be discussed and voted on by the members, as follows:

For your consideration, the following change is proposed in an attempt to make it easier for the Treasurer to ascertain when membership dues are to be paid by each member. We can discuss this at the July 31st meeting.

Article Four -- Membership

Section 4.07. Membership Dues. Dues shall be set by the Board and are due at the beginning of each fiscal year. New member dues received after September 1, will include the next year. Any changes in membership fees shall be announced at a regular monthly meeting at least three months before they go into effect.

Suggested revision:

Section 4.07. Membership Dues. Dues shall be set by the Board and are due at the beginning of each fiscal year. Dues paid later during the year, such as for new membership, are considered paid for the remainder of that year only and are to be renewed at the beginning of the next fiscal year. Any change in membership dues shall be announced at a regular monthly meeting at least three months before the change goes into effect.

FYI

Our "fiscal year" is already defined in the Bylaws under Article 11: "The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on January 1 of each year and conclude on the last day of December of the same year."

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Welcome New and Returning Members

Kirby & Linda McKillip  Beverly Morrison
Ed & Berniece Linek  George & Kathy Weisskopf
Larry & Diane Kerkhove  Jacqueline Valeokiak
Melody Hauch  Lindy & Freeman Mendell
Doug McKee welcomed everyone to the meeting. We were reminded that July 4th is the Teddy Bear Parade, generously sponsored by D&D Pest Control, Mommie Chic & Me, Bay Area Mothers of Multiples, Butler’s Courtyard, Sweet Southern Storks, and Gary Greene Realtors’ CEJKA TEAM. The City is having a Citizens Appreciation Day on July 4th with free hot dogs being served by City Council. Friday, July 14th, is our annual Living History Dinner at Walding Station. George Washington will be our speaker.

Our speaker at this meeting was James Bevell, the author of The Paper Republic: The Struggle for Money, Credit and Independence in the Republic of Texas. Jim’s presentation was entitled “Gunboat Diplomacy: Edwin W. Moore and the Texas Navy.” Texas independence wasn’t instantly won at the 1836 battle at San Jacinto—it actually took another 10 years. While peace negotiations between Texas and Mexico were being made, the French and Mexicans were fighting over unpaid loans, and a blockade of the Mexican/Texan coast resulted. Texas decided it needed a stronger navy, and in 1837, a naval shipyard was built in Galveston and six new ships, to be built in Baltimore, were ordered. When the new ships arrived in 1839-40, Edwin Moore was made Commander of the Texas Navy. He sailed the Texas Navy off the Mexican coast to encourage the Mexicans to negotiate. (The Mexican navy was being rebuilt after being bombarded by the French.) During these peace negotiations, the Texas fleet was ordered not to fire on Mexican ships unless the Mexicans fired first. Congress then cut naval appropriations and decommissioned almost the entire Texas Navy. Moore and what was left of the Texas Navy were used to make a survey of the Texas coastline. Meanwhile, Yucatan was making its bid for independence from Mexico and, in 1841, offered to recognize Texas as being independent in exchange for a treaty. Yucatan offered $8,000 a month for the Texas Navy to help it fight off the Mexicans and keep open the Yucatan ports. This would also prevent the Mexican navy from sailing up the coast into Texas. Moore accepted this venture, despite President Sam Houston’s ordering the fleet home, and by early March 1842, Moore and the Texas Navy had captured several Mexican vessels and broken the Mexican blockage at Yucatan. When Moore came home to Galveston, a court martial awaited him. Moore was acquitted of all but a few small allegations. He later worked on the design for the Customs House in Galveston. Yucatan rejoined Mexico after being independent for about 7 years.

Meeting adjourned.
Curator’s Corner ~ August, 2017

The Annual Schoolhouse Conference this year was held at Colby-Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire June 11th – 14th. Richard and I attended the conference with 67 others from 18 states with 22 schoolhouse sessions and a wonderful tour of schoolhouses in the area.

July opened with the annual Teddy Bear Parade and twenty volunteers and me. Thanks goes to volunteers Doug McKee, Joyce Zongrone, Pat Gregory, Mayor Pat Hallisey, Janice Hallisey, Mike Peterson, Michael Greenwald, Doris Teets, George & Kathy Weisskopf, Norton Grant, Todd Young, Kathie Nenninger, Larry Lee, Sarah Eubanks, Daryll Krogman Candace and Barry Blalock, Katie Benoit, Amber Murphy, and Richard Lewis. Thanks to Joyce, Janice and Amber, we had great publicity which brought out 96 participants and about 300 parents, grandparents and friends to watch the parade. Joyce even brought Channel 13 out to help share the story of the parade with others across the Houston area.

We had wonderful sponsors for this year’s parade and we want to thank them for their support. Thanks to Chris & Shannon Bennet, the Bay Area Mothers of Multiples, Dusty & Jessica Cejka and D & D Pest Control for their monetary donations.

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We want to thank Butler’s Courtyard for sharing their facility at the end of the parade with shade, fans and water. We want to thank Mommie Chic & Me for the wonderful prizes. Special thanks goes to Rudy Salcedo the man behind S-T-I-T-C-H-E-S, the bear and the Elite Care 24 Hour Emergency Center’s Bear Mascot. The League City business donated more than 300 Teddy Bears to the parade and its participants. And if I forgot anyone, I do apologize for the slip in my memory. All this help made the parade a wonderful success. Thank You.

We want to thank Doug & Charlene McKee for their recent donation of a League City Yankee Baseball uniform, shirt, pants and socks, a team picture and a child’s robe to add to our museum collection. We really appreciate donations of this kind to preserve our local history.

We held a work day in July and again had a great turnout of volunteers. We really want to thank Daryll Krogman from the Sign Shop for his generous donation of the bucket lift to aid in painting the roof of the schoolhouse. We want to thank Daryll Krogman, Doug McKee, Dave Hake, Mike Peterson and Richard Lewis who volunteered to paint the roof.

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Unfortunately, the weather competed with their time and slowed their work. The rain was off and on all weekend, but when it rained, it rained hard and washed off what progress had been made. There is still one side to finish, but it has been postponed for drier weather. Work has begun on the needed Icehouse repairs, but has been put on hold for the volunteers to find more time.

There were no schoolhouse sessions in the month of July, but 63 walk-in visitors came to tour the schoolhouse and the local history museum. Since I have one leg in a cast, I have learned to manage the tours with my scooter and help from the visitors to operate the lights. I also managed to digitize much of the collection during this slow period.

A large branch from the pecan tree located on the lot behind the Bus Barn fell onto our property. Thanks to Richard Lewis who cut it off the building and stacked it up for removal.
Successful 2017
Living History Dinner
with
General George Washington

The League City Historical Society Living History Dinner 2017 was a wonderful evening! Guests had time to socialize, support our silent auction, enjoy a tasty meal, and listen to the wise words of our esteemed speaker, General George Washington. Once again we were hosted at Walding Station and our event was catered by Ludwig's Catering. We switched things up a little this year by having our event in the summer, versus the fall, but we sold a record 93 tickets to our event. A very special thank you to our host and main sponsor, Gary Walding, for sharing his venue and his amazing hospitality. Ludwig's Catering did an awesome job at our event and very kindly sponsored our evening fundraiser as well. Butlers Courtyard generously donated all the wine for our bar and sponsored a host table. Thank you also to D & D Pest Control, SSCI, and Home Town Bank for table sponsorship. This event gets better every year and the credit all goes to the Society, its members and our generous local supporters and businesses. A HUGE thank you to Catharin Lewis, Diana Dornak, and Richard Lewis for making it all work out and having fun too!

Event Chair, Katie Benoit Hake
Butler's Courtyard presents

 BLOCK PARTY
 Open House & FOOD TRUCK Festival

Come join us for our Open House & Food Truck Festival Block Party! Enjoy music by our DJ's under the giant oaks and sparkling lights, grab a bite from one of the food trucks, get your photo taken in the Gingermap Photo Camper and meet the Butler's Courtyard Team. If you are planning a wedding, party or special event they will be glad to give you a tour. Dates are still available for Holiday Parties but they won’t last long!

FRIDAY 22 SEPT

6:30-9:30
122 Michigan Ave., League City, TX 77579
281.557.5551 • info@butlerscourtyard.com

Event supported by the Houston Food Truck Association, League City Downtown Association and League City Historical Society. Open to the public.
Did you know that San Luis Pass’s name... comes from San Luis Island which existed until 1855 when the Little Pass Strait sanded up, leaving only a peninsula at the eastern end of Brazoria County? The abandoned settlement once had a population of 2000 in 1836. Today it is a part of Follett’s Island, once called the Velasco Peninsula. As of 1989, about 20 people inhabited this area and it is now the location of San Luis Pass County Park.

San Luis Island played an important role in early Texas. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, an early explorer and the first historian of Texas, was one of the early Spanish explorers who landed there. His description of the island, one-half league by five leagues (1.3 by 13 miles), is too small to be Galveston Island, but corresponds to the size of San Luis Island. Modern-day measurement research confirms that the Spanish were amazingly accurate in estimating their travel in leagues.

Ninety of de Vaca’s Spaniards and one African slave set up residence on the island in 1528. de Vaca ventured back to the mainland where he became seriously ill during the winter of 1528. By the spring of 1529, also decimated by sickness, only thirteen Spaniards and an African slave remained alive back on San Luis Island. Later when the weather warmed up, all but two Spaniards, thinking de Vaca was dead, left for Mexico.

As for de Vaca, he recovered from his near-fatal illness and became the first European of record to become a Texas merchant. He traded sea shells for bison skins and red ochre, prized by the natives for body decorations. He returned to his island each winter because he refused to abandon the two Spaniards who remained there.

By 1532, one of the two remaining Spaniards died and de Vaca finally convinced his lone countryman, Lope de Oviedo, to accompany him down the coast toward Mexico.

For the next three centuries the history of the island is mired in the lore of the fierce Karankawa Indians. Archaeological records indicate they were large boned and six feet tall. By the early 1800s they were the most aggressive and fiercest of all Indian tribes roaming the coastal plains. Warfare was a fact of life for them which spawned the false myth that they were cannibals. Evidence indicates they practiced a ceremonial cannibalism involving the eating the flesh of their traditional enemies, a custom widespread among Texas tribes. Consuming bits and pieces of the flesh of dead or dying enemies was the ultimate revenge and gave them the magic power of the dead warrior or leader and was a magical means of capturing the enemy’s courage. By 1855 the tribe had vanished.

In 1823, Stephen F. Austin obtained a league of land on the island after a survey revealed water in San Luis Pass to be eighteen feet deep, deep enough to accommodate large sailing ships. Developers laid out and sold lots and forty houses were built.

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By 1836, hotels and general stores were opened and the population reached 2,000. The San Luis Advocate began publication in 1840 and a post office was established. Robert Mills, a Brazoria merchant, plantation owner and one of the founders of San Luis, built the first cotton compress in Texas. In 1838, Bradbury Follet built his home there and started a shipyard with his sons, but by 1842 tides and storms had filled the harbor and the new Republic of Texas was in a financial depression. Residents began leaving and by 1853 only 400 to 500 people remained. A damaging hurricane hit the coast that year, driving the rest of them away.

In early 1855 when the Little Pass Strait sanded up leaving only a peninsula at the eastern end of Brazoria County, a canal was finished between the harbor of San Luis on West Galveston Bay, connecting it to the Brazos River, becoming a cotton trade route between the Brazos and California. It was fifty-five feet wide and 4 ¼ miles long, connecting San Luis Bay with Oyster Creek for one mile to East Union Bayou, following the bayou for three-fourths of a mile to the Brazos River, accommodating both sail and steam vessels.

Finally, San Luis was totally abandoned by the latter part of the 1800s,

In 1989, the area had twenty-two permanent residents, when the Treasure Island resort development, a county park and recreational-vehicle campground began construction.

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2017 Dues Form
League City Historical Society

Thank you for being a member of the League City Historical Society. It is time to renew membership for 2016. Dues for various types of memberships are as listed below.

To renew your membership, choose the membership level that is best for you, complete the form below and mail to LCHS, P.O. Box 1642, League City, TX 77574. You may also bring renewal and check to the next meeting.

Note: If you have paid your dues in October 2016 or later, you are current for the year 2017.

Please update your membership information.

Name: _____________________________________________________________________________________
(If Family Membership, please include names of family members.)

Address ____________________________________________________________________________________
City__________________________________________________State________________      Zip____________

Phone: Home Phone________________________________ Cell Phone: ________________________________

Email Address: ______________________________________________________________________________

☐ Student/Active Military $20
☐ Senior (60 and over) $25
☐ Senior Couple $35
☐ Single individual $35
☐ Family $50
☐ Supporting Member $100
☐ Life Membership $400

Business Category
☐ Business Member $100
☐ Business Partner $200
☐ Business Leader $300

☐ Check if your name, address or email has changed recently.

☐ Check if you would like to receive your newsletter, meeting minutes and/or meeting notices by email, to help save on postage.