February 2017 Newsletter

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Calendar of Events

March 18th
Yard Sale – LCHS
Fund Raiser

March 31st
Doryn Danner Glenn
Director of Governmental Affairs,
Galveston County District Clerk

Galveston County’s Historical Court Records

April 27th
Steph McDougal,
City of League City
Historic District Commission

How to Research the History of your House.

February 23rd Speaker

League City Historical Society presents, Joyce Zongrone discussing Joseph Peter Giacchino, Dickinson’s Only Blacksmith, Thursday, February 23, 7 pm, at the West Bay Common School Museum, 210 North Kansas Street, League City, 281-554-2994.

Society member Joyce Zongrone will relate the story of Italian immigrant Joseph Peter Giacchino who came through Ellis Island in 1906 and travelled around the US until settling in Dickinson in 1930. He became their only blacksmith for 32 years until his death in at age 92 in 1962. His home stood in Dickinson for 74 years before being moved to League City in 2004 by local historian and museum director, Catharin Lewis and her husband Richard. The house now sits on their property alongside their home, the historic Cox-McQuirk house. The Lewises spent 8 years fully restoring the home which made its public debut in December 2013, during the League City Historic Homes Tour, hosting 150 visitors. In 2015, the Lewises received the Galveston Historical Foundation’s prestigious Sally B. Wallace Award for Historic Preservation.

Zongrone is a retired Navy Public Affairs Officer and journalist. She worked for the National Broadcasting Company in Burbank, CA, NBC News New York, the Galveston Daily News, The Houston Chronicle, The Bay Area Citizen and United Press International. She was also a technical writer for the Johnson Space Center, NASA, during the Challenger disaster. Joyce moved to League City after her return from Desert Storm’s Operation Southern Watch.

A Special Thanks
To Kathie Nenninger
for her many years of time and talents as our newsletter editor.

We are now proud to announce that Evelyn Garland will now be our new editor.

Save the Date: March 18
LCHS will hold a Yard Sale Fund Raiser
See more information on page 5
In Doug McKee’s absence, Catharin Lewis welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reminded us that it’s time to collect annual membership dues, and then she discussed upcoming events. The Society will have a yard sale on March 18. Please bring your donations to Catharin and Richard’s house no sooner than the week before the event. We need volunteers to price the goods, set up, and/or work the yard sale. We will have a ghost tour on October 28. We need a chairman for that event. The Living History Dinner this year will be in July. A chairman for the silent auction is needed. Our newsletter editor, Kathie Nenninger, is retiring from that responsibility and a new editor is needed. Catharin will do the newsletter for February. There is a docent-training workshop on February 1 at 9:00 am. A brainstorming session will also be held that day at 1:00 pm. The Engage Houston Program will meet with our Board members on February 7 at 2:00 pm.

Joyce Zongrone introduced our speaker, Doryn Glenn, the Director of Governmental Affairs for Galveston County's District Clerk. She spoke about the immigration and naturalization records from 1860 to 1950 stored at the District Clerk’s office on the 4th floor of the Justice Center in Galveston and now available online. These records are easily available to the public.

Citizenship for the immigrant entailed three pieces of paperwork: the Declaration of Intention, containing an Oath of Allegiance, the Certificate of Arrival, and the Petition for Citizenship/Naturalization.

The Declaration of Intention was sworn to by the immigrant before a Clerk of the Court. It contained an Oath of Allegiance requiring the person to renounce all allegiance to any foreign leader, state, or sovereignty, and to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. An immigrant could file a Declaration of Intention after living in an area for two years, and this document was filed in the county records closest to where the immigrant lived.

The next document needed was the Petition for Citizenship, a formal request written by a Clerk for the immigrant and filed three years after the Declaration of Intention. Oftentimes, these Petitions were never filed because the immigrant didn’t know about the form, thinking the Declaration of Intent was sufficient to attain citizenship.

A Certificate of Arrival was issued by the United States Department of Labor. This is a court record only. The Galveston Historical Foundation has a link to these records on their website.

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Minutes continued …

When searching Galveston County’s immigration records, one thing to remember is that these are records of those immigrants who first disembarked in Texas. Sometimes an immigrant completed the process for citizenship somewhere other than near their original port of entry, and thus those records are not filed in Galveston County. Each port in the country handled its immigration paperwork differently, and some documents were never filed in the public records. The Naturalization Act of 1906 made the forms used and the rules for applying for citizenship uniform throughout the country. Previous immigration laws had denied entrance to, among others, polygamists, anarchists, lunatics, and the ugly. Denying admission to anarchists became

The New Year seemed quiet at first with work to be done on year-end reports, inventory and general cleaning. However in a two-day span we had 105 children and 51 adults arrive from Kingwood to share in the schoolhouse program filling the schoolhouse, the Bus Barn and the Garden classroom. We also had 78 walk-in visitors during the month of January. Many more classes are already scheduled to visit in February and thru the spring.

We want to thank Catherine Gill for her recent donation of an ink jar and three books; Civic Science in the Home and Community (1923), The New Winston Dictionary for Children (1948) and the Book, Billy Goes to School (1949) for our schoolhouse collection. We really appreciate items concerning education or items and artifacts about League City’s past.

We had our first meeting this year with the Engage Program meeting at the Houston Public Central Library. Board members, Doris Teets and Phyllis White attended the meeting with me. In spite of a few technical difficulties, the group reviewed goal expectations and shared problems working with boards. We will be meeting with our consultant at the museum this month.

New exhibit plans are under way, but we are still looking for people to help serve on this committee. IF you like to be creative, do research, or write and have some time, we would like you to join us. Please call and let me know.

In the collection I found these two bits of interest from the Fuller Collection that I thought I would share this month.
Highlights of our Museum Gift Shop
Melissa Aguilar, Education Director

Need a different gift idea? Come to the Museum gift shop and pick up something special.

The Life and Times of Abe Lincoln (A Coloring and Activity Book)
Mark Dewalt, Merrissa Ritch, Jessica Conley, Jennifer Brown

This Abraham Lincoln inspired Coloring & Activity book is a fun and engaging way to learn about our 16th president as we celebrate his birthday and Presidents Day. The coloring book pictures depict early frontier life. They show and explain to children what the inside of homes and the landscape of towns looked like when Abe was a boy. Alongside the pictures are interesting facts about things like Lincoln’s pets, a turkey named Jack and Old Bob, his horse. The book follows through his entire presidency cleverly teaching children a history lesson covering the Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg and Fort Sumter, all while coloring. The back of the book includes an assortment of puzzles and brain game activities children love including: a secret message to decode, Morse Code, a crossword puzzle, hidden pictures, a sentence unscramble, a maze, missing letters message, word unscramble, and connect the dots.

More Than 200,000 Country Schools: A Guide for Research, Preservation, and Education
Lucy Townsend, Editor

This is a must read for anyone who has found themselves enchanted with or even just curious about the history of one-room country schools. In this book Lucy Townsend has interviewed many teachers, preservationists, and historians to get their personal accounts about the challenges, successes and the future endeavors they are facing on their journey to preserve not only the historic buildings but the American history they represent. Each chapter will kindle a desire to know more about this part of our U.S. history. The very first chapter features an interview with our own Richard and Catharin Lewis of League City describing how they began the West Bay Common School Children’s Museum. They have successfully been directing the museum for the past 24 years. We look forward to celebrating the 25th anniversary next year!
The League City Historical Society
is having a fund raiser

“YARD SALE”

Saturday March 18th
1518 East Walker Street
8 am to 5pm

Start you Spring Cleaning early! Bring the good stuff…
the clean and gently used things that you are no longer using
to support the LCHS Yard Sale. Share your treasures to help
raise funds for projects of the League City Historical Society.

Bring your items to 1518 East Walker beginning March 11th. If
you want, you can even put a price on the item to help save us
time, but it is not necessary.

Then be sure to come on March 18th
“you might find a treasure that someone else is letting go”.

If you want to help, we welcome the extra hands to make
the day more fun. We will even give you subs, chips and
drinks on the day(s) you help. There might even be a dessert.

Come and see for yourself.
It's that time of year again to renew your membership and *join the League City Historical Society!*

**What do you get for your membership?**

Fun friends that are interested in history, architecture, storytelling, quilting, museums, reenactments....all the things that you enjoy.

**What does LCHS get from you joining?**

Your continued involvement in our community!

See the attached membership dues form and send to the

LCHS
PO Box 1642
League City, TX 77574

or drop it by the museum.

We want you to share in our fun!
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 2017. Dues are for various types of memberships as listed below.

You can now join (or re-new) your LCHS membership online, by check or credit card. Click the link below:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/league-city-historical-society-membership-tickets-32110582617

Or fill out the form below and mail a check to LCHS P.O. Box 1642 League City, TX 77574. Or bring your check or cash to the Museum during the week or at a monthly meeting.

**CATEGORY**
- Student / Active Military: $20
- Senior (60 and over): $25
- Senior Couple: $35
- Single (Individual): $35
- Family: $50
- Supporting Patron: $100
- Life Membership: $400

**BUSINESS CATEGORY**
- Business Member: $100
- Business Partner: $200
- Business Leader: $300

Please update your membership information here.

Name: _____________________________________________________
(if family Membership, please include names of family members)

Address: ___________________________________________________

City: _________________ State: _________ Zip: ____________

Phone: _________________ Cell: _______________________

Email address: ____________________________________________

☐ Check if your name, address or email has changed recently.
☐ Check if you would like to receive you newsletter, meeting minutes and or meeting notices by email, to help save postage.
First Subway in America...Boston

Did you know that, while London boasts the world’s oldest underground train network opened in 1863, Boston built the first subway in the United States in 1897? On September 1, 1897, at 6 am, over 100 people crowded onto the first subway car in US history and travelled through a tunnel under downtown Boston. More than 100,000 people would take the three-and-a-half minute trip that day. They were riding on the first subway line in the United States, built by Irish and Italian laborers making fifteen cents an hour, about $20 an hour in today’s money. Their trip cost five cents, $15 in today’s money. A one day pass now costs $12.

It was not long before other American cities followed Boston's example. New York opened nearly nine miles of subway in October 1904. Philadelphia’s system was built between 1905 and 1908.

The race underground began on March 12, 1888, when the most severe blizzard in American history, crippled the Northeast with a blanket of four feet of snow. Four hundred people died. The snowfall created a transportation crisis in the city of Boston, which was the most congested city in the US with 8,000 horses pulling trolleys as the population’s main method of transportation.

Six years earlier, a young naval officer, Frank Sprague, after seeing London’s underground rail system, began his “jump into the unknown.” He patented his earlier invention of a type of dynamo into a subway system powered by electricity. Thomas Edison recruited him, but Sprague later resigned from Edison’s research and development facility in Menlo Park New Jersey, in order to retain his ownership in his invention of the electric motor.

Sprague courted transportation moguls like Jay Gould and Henry Whitney to help realize his dream of an underground rail system. Gould was a railroad developer and Whitney an industrialist who would later found the West End Railway Company of Boston in 1889. At the time, private industrialists were deciding where transit lines went. It wasn’t until 1891 when Boston Mayor Nathan Matthews declared that the city streets shouldn’t be run by private investors or patronage. One year later in 1892, the State of Massachusetts formed the Rapid Transit Commission, the first publicly run transportation in the country. A new era of cities and states making investments in their infrastructure began.

On October 12, 1948, Liz and Darby began their glorious love affair. They met at Galveston Beach and enjoyed many good times at the skating rink and bowling alley. They were married June 6, 1949, setting up house in Galveston and starting their family with sons B.K. Jr., Greg, and Chris. The family moved from the Island in 1959 to League City adding another son, Matt, and Darby’s namesake daughter, Darve`. Liz took country-living in stride with its own sense of challenges, from “party line” telephones to bullfrogs in the bathtub to bobcat paws hidden in the mattress to “pet” snakes in the garage.

Liz and Darby were very active in all of their kids’ activities. Liz was an integral part of the League City Historical Society documenting many of the city’s early events. She helped with St. Mary’s Bazaar, League City Little League, and Fairview Cemetery. Liz served as Team Mom and head cheerleader for her sons’ many sports activities. She always felt a connection to the Island, spending many Sundays at West Beach with family and friends, and enjoying many walks along the beach searching for sand dollars and shark’s teeth.

As the children grew, Liz was involved with setting up the League City Library and went to work for the local newspaper, The News Citizen. With her extensive gossip network, she authored a weekly column, “Under the Hair Dryer.” The 80s, 90s and new millennium brought grandchildren and great grandchildren. Liz was a great Mom but proved to be an even greater Grandma. This seemed to be her life’s calling as she and Grandpa attended school field trips, dance recitals, band and choir concerts, softball and basketball games. With seven granddaughters, they were always on the go supporting the myriad of activities. She spent many hours singing nursery rhymes, playing board games, and passing out Butterfly Kisses to any youngster within her reach. Liz had a deep appreciation for history. As a Daughter of the Confederacy, the granddaughters became involved with Children of the Confederacy. Liz loved to sing Dixie! The family grew and grew with large gatherings for Thanksgiving and Christmas, crawfish boils and pig roasts at the Smith and Jones backyard parties, and each New Year’s Day everyone enjoyed Liz’s annual good luck meal of pork roast, cabbage, black-eyed peas and mashed potatoes – Yum! She taught her granddaughters the cooking secrets of many of her specialties including Dumplings, Carrot Cake, and Sand Tarts.

While her health declined these past few years, she accepted her trials and tribulations – she loved to know everything about everyone and being involved with the conversation of our lives. She tracked the family’s genealogy and loved to add HUGS on everyone’s Facebook posts. Liz touched so many lives; she will be missed, but never forgotten.

In her passing, she is preceded by her husband, Darby. She is survived by her five children and their spouses B.K. Jr., Greg and Pam, Chris, Matt and Suzie, Darve` and Favorite Son-in-Law Mark Hamman; grandchildren Krissy Fleming, Shallon and Al Barboza, Melissa and Matt McDonald, Amanda and Jeff Vacek, Stephanie and Jason Cole, Ginny Fleming, and DeLynne and Michael Lockwood; great grandchildren Amy, James-Michael, Zachary, Alison, Matthew, Emma, Hannah, Jacob, Leah, Everett, Evelyn, Harrison and Declan; great great grandson, Kingsley; and grand dog Jammer. Liz’s extensive family will carry on her legacy of love.

A vigil and rosary is scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, from 5pm to 8pm, at Crowder Funeral Home, 1645 E. Main St, League City. The rosary will begin at 7pm. The funeral services will be the next day, February 15, at 11am. Graveside services will be at Fairview Cemetery immediately afterwards.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the Fairview Cemetery, League City Library, or the charity of your choice.