March 2009 Newsletter

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“Saving Our Legacy through Restoration” is the topic of our March 26th LCHS meeting. Our speaker will be Susan Fineman.

Susan, a local historian and preservationist from Nashua, NH is currently the editor and publisher of the Country School Association of America Newsletter. A retired educator she is also the Director and schoolmarm in the District #1 Schoolhouse in Nashua.

District #1 Schoolhouse

Calendar

March 26, 2009 – Suzan Fineman - Saving our Legacy Through Restoration. West Bay Common School Children’s Museum 210 Kansas, League City Refreshments 6:45pm Meeting 7:00pm

April 30, 2009 – Kathryn Morrow, MA - Defender of America’s Gulf Coast - A History of Ellington Field

from the president…

Ronnie Richards

As I write this it is Spring Break and the One Room Schoolhouse gets a break from class and so do the dedicated teachers and museum curator. It’s been a busy February and March at both the school and the Historical Society. The Ghosts of the Past Saturday March 7, was a wonderful event with perfect weather. Special thanks to all the great volunteers who helped and particularly to Co-Chairs Deborah Gammon and Joanna Sharp. I had the honor, completely unplanned, of taking the tour with the Fleming family whose father BK “Darby” Fleming was one of the WWII veterans portrayed. It was very moving to hear Darby’s story and to see how it touched the family.

February 24th the City Council of League City approved our museum expansion. Thanks to all of you that were able to attend to support our application and special thanks to George Weisskopf and Richard Lewis who joined me during the hearing to speak in support of the approval. The City Council also voted that night to rename the Clear Creek Nature Park to the Dr. Ned and Faye Dudney Nature Park. What an honor for them and their family.

Please mark your calendar and join us for a City Council Workshop in Council Chambers on April 14th at 6 pm. Councilman Neal Baron has invited us to the Workshop to tell the Mayor and City Council about our hands on history program at the school. We encourage everyone to join us and show your support.

The February monthly meeting was hosted at Butler’s Courtyard. We had a strong turnout and interesting speaker. Our next meeting is back at the Museum on Thursday, March 26 and we will hear from Susan Fineman on the topic Saving our Legacy Through Restoration. Susan Fineman is a local historian and preservationist from that is traveling all the way from Nashua, New Hampshire to speak to us. It should be interesting. See you there.
Work and schoolhouse sessions picked up the pace for the month of February. We held 16 sessions with groups coming from Brookwood Elementary, Friendswood Christian, St Mary’s, Tomball Christian, Faith West from Katy and a local scout group. We had 352 visitors and brought in $1252.50 that includes a $100 donation from Pat Shipp from Cornelius, North Carolina and $16.50 in gift shop sales.

The museum added three more books to the collection this past month. We wish to thank Barbara Vermillion for her recent donation of the book entitled, The Latch Key of My Bookhouse edited by Olive Beaupre Miller, 1925. We also wish to thank Judith Haley Allton, speaker for the Society’s February meeting, for her book entitled, The Little White Church on Nasa Road One – From Rice Farmers to Astronauts by Judith Haley Allton, Patricia M. Brackette, and Dana Ray 1993. We wish to thank George Gorsen for his recent donation of the book entitled, The Normal Mental Arithmetic – A Thorough and Complete Course by Analysis and Induction by Edward Brooks, 1868. This book belonged to R. T. Hadley, father-in-law of George Gorsen, a life long resident of League City, Texas.

Our Museum Collection also includes many of the Fairview Cemetery Records. After the months of work done with our Fairview Cemetery Collection, we are proud to announce that we received the Texas Historical Commission’s Historic Cemetery destination certificate. The distinction means the cemetery has been legally recorded through the THC’s Historic Texas Cemetery Program, an important step in ensuring its preservation. This designation is reserved for cemeteries that are at least 50 years old and documented through the Historic Texas Cemeteries process to record their historic association and significance. A dedication ceremony to commemorate this historic designation is being planned and will be announced soon. I wish to thank Paula Tanner, Deborah Gammon, Melody Hauch, Kathie Nenninger, Carole Ragland and Bertha Adams for their help with me on this project. We are continuing to collect information and data concerning Fairview Cemetery and those resting there. If you have papers, pictures or information about the families buried at Fairview, we hope you will share your records with us at the Museum. Watch for more news concerning the cemetery.

As the Museum continued through the month of March, there has been a steady flow of visitors and schoolhouse sessions. The Annual Ghost Tour opened the new exhibit of “On the Home Front” and this will be up through May. The Annual Meeting of the Texas Association of Museums is being held in El Paso March 17 – 20 and I will be attending the training event. I look forward to learning new ideas to share as well as networking with others in the Museum field.

We wish to thank the many volunteers who help with the daily operations of the Museum by donating their time and talents. This is a very important part of the program and very much appreciated. Thank You.

**Ghosts of the Past Tour**

**The Greatest Generation**

**The Veterans of WWII**

**March 7, 2009**

…Deborah Gammon Co-Chairman

March 7th dawned breezy and warm, almost perfect for the cemetery tour. It was a little too breezy. We had difficulty keeping our chapeaus on our heads.

Diana Dornak and Sherry Frankovich manned the admissions table at the museum.

Dr. Terry Williams and Catherine Gill
Dr. Terry Williams displayed his WWII era jeep and gun at the museum. Doris Teets, Diane Gillette and Joanna Sharp manned the admissions table at the cemetery. Hosted by Deborah Gammon and Kathy Weisskopf, the tours were every 30 minutes. Gene Teets, Jeff Hansen and Dan Biggs handled the parking.

Alice Braud Jones delighted the crowd with the story of Caroline Atkinson d’Etchegoyen’s family and how they served their country during the war. Alan T. Yang portrayed Suichi Imai and told the story of the Japanese families in the Webster area. Sarah Eubanks pretended to have a victory garden and told of the first veterinarian and his family in Kemah that included the veteran, James C. Hewitt.

Third time pro, George Weisskopf told the story of the downing of two planes during the Texas City Explosion of 1947 that took the life of WWII veteran, Truman Hatfield. Phyllis White, the niece of Mrs. Mary McFadden told the story of the McFadden family that included the “last shootout in League City”. Percy McFadden died in a training accident in the war.

I want to thank everyone for their help; Catharin Lewis for printing the programs and presenting a wonderful exhibit “On the Home Front” at the museum, Diana Dornak for designing the programs, Joanna Sharp for printing the rack cards and flyers, Dr. Terry Williams for the loan of the WWII era jeep, all my ghosts and helpers. I really appreciate all the help.

Every one had a good time and enjoyed the tour. Noted guests were Mr. and Mrs. Walter Osterman who are related to the Hewitt family and Mr. Art Hewitt, former POW of WWII.

I was a little disappointed in the numbers of attendants as we only had approximately 80 guests. But, after receiving so many compliments from attendees on the tour, I have changed my mind to know that sometimes success isn’t just monetary.
The Clear Creek Nature Center is being renamed in honor of one of our founding members and her husband! Future generations will know this park as the “Dr. Ned and Fay Dudney Clear Creek Nature Center,” in honor of this special couple who have done so much for our community over the last 55 years.

For those of you who haven’t lived in League City that long, Dr. Dudney was one of the original incorporators of League City, and served on the first city council in 1962. (Until then it was an unincorporated community. However, when plans to build NASA’s Manned Spacecraft Center on Clear Lake were announced, local citizens became concerned that Houston might try to extend its borders in this direction. To protect the uniqueness and identity of League City, they decided to formally incorporate.)

Dr. Dudney also helped found the hospital now known as Clear Lake Regional Medical Center, as well as the Bay Area Economic Development Foundation. He and Fay were both founding members of St. Christopher Episcopal Church.

Fay has been very active in community service and development projects, helping found the historical society in 1989, and serving as president in 1995. She has also served on the Friends of Helen Hall Library Board, the steering committee for Helen’s Garden, the Historic District Commission, and was a charter member of the Butler Longhorn Museum Board. In addition, she has served on the Galveston County Historic Commission for many years. Her years with the League City Garden Club fostered her dedication to preserving the natural environment.

Her daughter, Vaness Hamilton, recalls that “Two of the things Mom was involved in which really have made an impact on the face of League City are that she helped save the oak trees on Main Street when it was widened in the 70’s, and she served on the committee to construct the band stand in League Park. When word got around that the trees were threatened, my friends were cheering my mom’s efforts and offering to chain themselves to the trees. And Mom would always say she couldn’t have done it without Carolyn d’Etchegoyen, who joined her in asking the county commissioners to save the live oaks.”

The bandstand was a Sesquicentennial Committee project involving the League City Garden Club and shop students from Clear Creek High School. This project gave students an appreciation for the history of their city, with an opportunity for hands-on construction of a new gazebo on the site of League City’s original bandstand.

The rededication of the park is being planned for April. Clear Creek Nature Center is located on the south side of Clear Creek at Egret Bay Blvd. and can be accessed from Egret Bay Blvd, just south of the bridge.

Unfortunately, it still has trash along the high water mark from Hurricane Ike, and a two-day volunteer cleanup event is planned for Saturday and Sunday March 28th and 29th, starting at 9:00 am. Hot dogs will be served for volunteers at noon.

The Clear Creek Environmental Foundation, and friends of Fay and Ned are organizing this clean up with support from League City’s Parks Department. Several churches and other local organizations are being asked to send volunteers. If you can come out or know of groups that would like to volunteer, it would be greatly appreciated.

“This will be a land cleanup along the existing trails. We just have to get the trash bagged and to the trails. The City will remove it from there,” says Vaness. Please call her and register if you would like to help. Her home phone number is 281-554-8085, and her email is: vanesshamilton@mac.com

The park is located on the South Shore of Clear Creek off Highway 270 as pictured above looking North to South.

Dr. Ned and Fay Dudney Clear Creek Nature Park, once known as the Davis tract, is one of the last remaining large underdeveloped properties with quality wetlands. The 148-acre park provides a home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. The site is an excellent habitat for migrant birds, such as sand hill cranes, great blue herons, ibises, American egrets, great white herons, owls and various song birds, which use the area to nest and feed. Occasionally the endangered whooping cranes have been known to visit. Ducks, pelicans, shore birds and wading birds all enjoy the large isolated pond along Clear Creek. The site’s wetlands serve as a nursery for many species of fish. The wetlands to the east help to provide homes to mammals such as deer, bobcat, coyote, and raccoons.
League City Historic District
Commission Report

LCHS Rep. to the LCHDC... Fay Dudney

- In February, the League City Historic District commission approved 2 house elevations for construction in the Township Development on Kansas Ave. and Clear Creek.
- Having no historical significance, permission to demolish an accessory structure at 307 Wisconsin Ave. was granted to the owner of the structure.
- Stronghold Roofing and Flooring at 1026 was granted administrative approval to a request for an Operations Permit and a Sign Permit.
- Dennis Ruhl, resident and business owner in the Historic District, has been appointed to the Commission. The appointment for another District resident is pending.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2009 at 6:00 PM in City of League City Council Chambers.

Membership Renewals
Diana Dornak, Treasurer

Our annual League City Historical Society Membership dues are due. Please mail your dues to P.O. Box 1642 League City, TX 77574.

A big thank you to those members who have already renewed. If you paid your dues in October or later your membership is already paid for 2009.

Become a supporting Member of the League City Historical Society....

Thank you for your interest in your community.

League City Historical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 1642
League City, Texas 77574

I/We wish to become a member of The League City Historical Society. Enclosed is a check to cover dues.

Our new Membership Directory will be published in late spring. So that we can include your updated information in the new directory, please send your dues by April 1st.

Note: If you have paid your dues in October 2008 or later, you are current for the year 2009.

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLED:

Single (Individual).........$25
Family Membership...........$40
Senior Citizen...(65 or older). $15
Organization.................$50
Life Membership.............$250

Please update your membership information.

Name/s:_____________________
____________________________
Address: _______________________
____________________________
Phone: _______________________
Email: _______________________

☐ 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.

Circle projects you might be interested in working on:

School/Museum, Tree Registry, Membership, Fund-Raising, Landmark Medallions, Events/Receptions.