September 2016 Newsletter

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Calendar of Events

September 23
Living History Dinner
President Ulysses S. Grant

September 29
Revitalizing Historic League City
Mayor Pat Hallisey

October 27
“League City Haunts: The Unofficial Ghosts of League City”
LCDR Joyce Zongrone, USN (Ret.)

November 17
“The History of the Catholic Church in Galveston County”
Lisa May, Archivist, Archdiocese of Houston

December – No meeting

December 10
Historic Home Tour
10am-5pm

Revitalizing Historic League City

Our speaker this month, Mayor Pat Hallisey, is a life-long resident of the Houston region. His ties to the League City and Clear Lake area go back to college when he first coached several summer league swim teams in the area. He has held numerous public service and private sector positions in Galveston County, Harris County and League City throughout his career.

Hallisey previously served as League City’s fourth mayor from 1994 to 1995. He is credited with finishing the promises of several previous administrations starting with lobbying the council to provide the largest single tax decrease in the city’s history during this time. He also ensured bonds were sold for three outstanding projects: State Highway 96, Chester Davis Sportsplex, and the Dallas Salmon Sewer Plant expansion.

As a League City resident, he continuously volunteers with throughout the community. His volunteerism efforts include: developing Helen’s Garden on Main Street for his longtime friend Walter Hall; co-founded League City Proud and Holiday in the Park; created League City Patrons of the Parks Foundation; and preserving the League City Butler oaks along with Margaret Revis and Fay Dudney and the League City Oak Tree Committee.

Find attached the Revitalizing Plan for Historic League City to print and bring with you.

The League City Historical Society meets at the Bus Barn next to the West Bay Common School Children’s Museum 210 Kansas Street, League City 6:45pm Social ~ 7:00pm Meeting
August 25, 2016

Doug McKee opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He asked for items to be auctioned at the Living History Dinner.

Mike Conley spoke about publishing 2 books this year; the first is short stories of his life, and the second is a novel set during WWII. Mike donated a copy of each book to the Museum. The Butler Longhorn Museum is having an event in September to launch Mike’s books.

David Garland announced that radio station KUBC 1540 AM is coming back, featuring local Galveston programming.

Matt Falco is looking for photographs of the Rose Theater.

Mike Peterson spoke about the upcoming Home Tour, to be held December 10 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Six houses will be shown, and quilts will be on display in the area.

There will be a special Board meeting on September 8, and September 23 is the Living History Dinner.

We were reminded that the Historical Society has a Facebook page.

Joyce Zongrone introduced our speaker, Lou Graves MacBeth, from the Jean Laffite Society. The Laffite Society conducts research, holds meetings, and organizes trips to locations having to do with Laffite. Ms. MacBeth’s topic was “The Crew Left Behind,” concerning the men who remained after Laffite left Galveston. She’s done a great deal of research on 8 of Laffite’s men who stayed in Galveston. By way of background, there is a lot of information concerning Laffite and his brother Pierre. There is even a journal purportedly written by Laffite, “Memoirs of Jean Laffite,” which is highly questionable as a source, according to the Laffite Society. In the early 1800’s, Laffite settled in New Orleans and was very well accepted in New Orleans society, despite his chosen profession. After the governor of Louisiana put out a wanted poster for Laffite, and vice versa, Laffite moved his group to Grand Terre, Louisiana, where Laffite held auctions of his prizes from smuggling and pirating, as well as selling slaves. Jim Bowie purchased slaves from Laffite. During the War of 1812 and the Battle of New Orleans, Britain offered Laffite a rank, but Laffite chose to back the U.S. and postponed telling the British his decision. This kept the British hanging around until word could be sent of their location. Laffite and his men fought for the U.S. during the Battle, and President Andrew Jackson gave credit to Laffite for the victory. Jackson offered Laffite and his men pardons for any and all bad acts previously committed, but only if they would leave the area. Laffite move his group to an area called Campeche, Galveston, in 1817. The concrete steps tourists are shown in Galveston that are supposed to be the steps to Laffite’s house are actually the remains of the Hendricks house built very near the site of Laffite’s house. Laffite left Galveston in 1820, and it’s uncertain where he went and even when he died. Ms. MacBeth encouraged us to visit the Laffite Society and passed out a brochure.

Meeting adjourned.
Did you know that the Texas Navy recently celebrated its 181st Anniversary on Sept. 17th in Galveston TX and also honored its legendary founders with a Medallion Memorial Ceremony at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin on Sept. 19th?

The Republic of Texas, 1836-1846, had its own Navy, which once dominated the Gulf of Mexico from 1835-1837. September 17 is Texian Navy Day, honoring the determination of the small Texas Navy who helped secure the Gulf of Mexico and protect Texas' independence.

At the Convention of 1836 held at Washington on the Brazos, an ad interim government of Texas operated from March 16 to October 22, 1836 and ended with the inauguration of Sam Houston as the President of the Republic of Texas on October 22, 1836. Sam Houston appointed Samuel Rhoads Fisher as the First Secretary of the Republic of Texas Navy.

The greater majority of Texas' early settlers came by sea from New Orleans or Mobile to Galveston, Matagorda Bay, or the mouth of the Brazos River. Trade lines were created when lumber, wool, and cotton from Texas were sent back to New Orleans by sea. At that time, Texas had a provisional government and when hostilities broke out with Mexico, the need for a Navy was realized to protect those supply lines. On November 25, 1835, the General Council of the Provisional Government passed a bill providing for the purchase of four schooners and for the organization of the Texas Navy. The same bill provided for the issuance of Letters of Marque to privateers until the navy should become a reality. (N.B. Jean Laffite was a privateer in his heyday in Galveston, 1817-1821) In January 1836 schooners were purchased and the Texas Navy was born. The vessels included: the 60-ton William Robbins, converted to a schooner of war and rechristened Liberty, the 125-ton Invincible, built in Baltimore for the African slave trade; the 125-ton Independence, the former United States Revenue Cutter Ingham and the 125-ton Brutus.

The first Texas Navy lasted until the middle of 1837 at which time all ships had been lost. The Liberty was sold because the Texas government could not pay the repair bill. The Brutus ran aground in Galveston Bay and was destroyed by the breakers. The Invincible also ran aground at the same time as the Brutus. It was surrendered to Mexico in the Battle of the Brazos River in 1837 and later ran aground. Its wreckage is believed to have been discovered in 1995 by the National Underwater and Marine Agency, founded by Clive Cussler.

Between September 1837 and early 1838, Texas had no ships and there was no Texas Navy between September 1837 and in March 1839, when the first ship of the second navy was commissioned. By July 1843, Mexican hostilities had all but ended. In June 1846 the ships of the Texas Navy were transferred to the United States Navy. The officers of the Texas Navy requested transfer in the U.S. Navy, but the proposal was opposed. In 1857 the Second Texas Navy was no more.

The armed privateers and the first Texas Navy did a phenomenal job of controlling the sea lanes along the Texas coast, supporting the Texas land-war effort while thwarting logistic support to the invading Mexican forces.

The Texas Navy's successfully protected and defended the coastline of Texas maintaining sea control of the Texas coast prevented any Mexican sea invasions to reconquer Texas.

The glory of the small fleets of battered ships and the valiant seamen was largely forgotten until 1958, when Governor Marion Price Daniel, Sr., established a Third Texas Navy. Headquarters of the Third Texas Navy was reestablished at its original base in Galveston by Governor Preston Smith in October 1970. The commemorative, nonprofit organization, chartered by the Texas Secretary of State in October 1972, was designed to assure the survival of Texas Navy and its historical significance.
This coming Friday, September 23rd, is the League City Historical Society's 10th Annual Living History Dinner. This year's guest is former President Ulysses S. Grant portrayed by nationally known Scott Whitney from Illinois. Dinner will be catered by Ludwigs Catering and wine provided by Nancy and Ronnie Richards (Butler’s Courtyard). Of course the evening is made extra special by the generous donation of Gary Walding and his amazing facility, Walding Station.

Thank you to the Society members and many supportive businesses who have made wonderful donations to the Silent Auction - there is something for everyone! Silent auction and hors d'oeuvres begin at 6 pm, dinner will be served at 7 followed by our speaker. We look forward to seeing everyone on Friday and making this 10th Annual Dinner another fun and successful event.
Honor Flight Austin

ALL-WOMAN FLIGHT

The trip of a lifetime for Women Veterans of WWII, the Vietnam War, and the Korean War*

October 7-8, 2016

* Our WWII veterans will receive first priority. We need your help finding all eligible World War II Women Veterans who live in Texas. We will fly them to Washington D.C., free of charge, to see the WWII Memorial, the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, and others. Women veterans from the Korean and Vietnam Wars in the following counties are also eligible: Bastrop, Bell, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Gillespie, Gonzales, Gay, Lee, Llano, Milam, Travis, and Williamson.

For more information or to donate please visit:
http://www.honorflightaustin.org

Send checks to: 815-A Brazos Street
UPS Box 498, Austin, TX 78701
(Please specify in your donation that it’s for the All-Woman Flight)
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 2015 or later, you are current for the year 2016

**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.

Name: _________________________________________________________________

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

Address ________________________________________________________________

City __________________________ State ____________ Zip __________

Phone: Home Phone_________________________ Cell Phone: _______________________

email address: ____________________________________________________________

☐ 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.