



League City Historical Society League City, Texas



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February 2022

LCHS Newsletter

Diana Dornak, Editor

Classes resume at the One Room Schoolhouse!



Almost 2 years after field trips were canceled and our schoolhouse program and museums shut down, classes are back!

It has definitely been a time of reflection and change but it has also been a time for LCHS to refocus on our priorities. Hands on History is such an important part of who we are so having kids back to experience 1898 is a wonderful feeling!

We look forward to a busy year of visitors, more field trips and continuing our venture to reach children nationwide with our developing virtual tours.

Please join us in welcoming back our School Mams and classes. Your membership and donations support this and many other projects of the LCHS. Thank you!



From The President



Dear LCHS Members & Friends,

Well,-- the weather is beautiful today! Just a reminder about a couple of things. Remember to get out and vote! You can vote early to avoid the long lines. This is a privilege we all have,-- so go VOTE!

“Thank you” to Michael Peterson for installing our new security system. This will enable us to keep our facility and collection of artifacts safe and secure.

Remember also that the League City Historical Society needs your membership and dues are due. We appreciate every one of our members. Thank you ahead of time for renewing your membership.

Well, I think I will take my little dog “Sneakers” for a walk this morning and view the beautiful oak trees in my neighborhood. The historic area is truly a beautiful place to live and work. I am truly thankful.

FAITH AND SERVICE,
Doug McKee
281-338-1073

Expect the unexpected: Visit Helen Hall Library

By Joyce Zongrone

A library is not a random collection of books. It is a living organism growing alongside its community; a place you go to discover the world where the librarians are the educational tour guides, whisking you away to a world of knowledge.



On Valentine's Day this year Helen Hall Library celebrated its 50th Birthday, on a day when people exchange tokens of affection; a library is a token of a community's affection.

The Helen Hall Library story began more than 50 years ago in 1971, the same year as the rest of the city complex was built.

The library opened for business on February 14, 1972, in a 7,000 square foot single-story building. On opening day, the library had less than 3,000 books and no audio-visual materials were added until 1975.

In the early eighties City Librarian Susan Mathews and the Library Board began planning to expand the overcrowded building. In January 1985 the library's name was changed to honor charter board member Helen Hall, whose support sustained the library before her death in 1981. A new 29,300 square foot library building was dedicated on February 28, 1988.



Susan Mathews
Librarian
1972 - 2004

During the 1990s technological boom, an on-line public access catalog containing data on all the collections in the library, was installed. By 1995, Helen Hall Library became the largest and busiest mainland member of the Galveston County Library System, with over 18,000 patrons per month.

The twentieth century began sadly when the beloved City Librarian Susan Mathews, passed away in 2004, having made the library her home away from home for 32 years.

Beyond books, the library offers a myriad of electronic and digital resources from computers to DVD's and electronic books with free access to an electronic app that patrons can download to personal devices and access free books from all county libraries. (Continued on next page.)

(Expect the Unexpected: Visit Helen Hall Library – Continued from previous page.)

Children’s programs include story times, music, stuffed animals and real dogs.

Partnering with local community volunteer organizations, the library offers two unique programs, *Neighborhood Storytime* and *Read to Dogs*.

The League City Historical Society and the Clear Creek Republican Women’s Club partner for *Neighborhood Storytime*, reading to children in various locations such as the Historical Society’s Garden Classroom, its 1898 One Room Schoolhouse, the Ghirardi Family Water Smart Park, Hometown Heroes Park and Rustika Café. All of the reading volunteers are members of Clear Creek Republican Women’s Club.



1000 Books before Kindergarten



Therapy dog enjoys affection from a young reader.

R.E.A.D., Reading Education Assistance Dogs, provides registered therapy dogs to improve reading and communication skill. Children read to a dog who unconditionally listens.

The library also participates in the nationwide public charity program *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten*, promoting reading readiness for preschoolers.

Library patrons can find something to fit their needs from 898 programs available throughout the year. In 2021, there were 26,226 program attendees.



Teen Writers Club - Spring 2022

Teens and Tweens are treated to programs which include role-playing games, a writers’ club and an entrepreneur workshop.

Adults can choose from different book clubs, writers clubs, a history club, lectures on current topics and computer classes.

Both adults and teens make up 156 active volunteers who engage with the patrons.

The Local History Room houses archival materials and artifacts documenting the past of League City and the surrounding areas, tracing the evolution of the region from its indigenous inhabitants 9000 years ago, to the first landowner in 1831, the 1854 arrival of the founding family, the Butlers, into the 20th century. One of its gems is a 6-by-4-foot, 123-year-old wall hanging, painted on handkerchief cotton, portraying League City (at the age of two years) and adjoining county. (Continued on next page.)

(Expect the Unexpected: Visit Helen Hall Library – Continued from previous page.)

"Birds-eye view of League City" was envisioned and created by "house, sign and ornamental and paper hanger," J.M. Mahaffey in 1898.

It is no surprise the Helen Hall Library received the prestigious 2021 Achievement of Library Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal Library Director's Association, for outstanding contributions to public libraries in Texas. The award takes note of the library's providing services to all populations, including underserved and special ones; providing educational, cultural, literacy and summer reading programs; keeping pace with digital technology and most important of all, continual comprehensive staff training.

The library houses more than 500,000 traditional, non-traditional and digital resources including 100,000 volumes.

So, when you walk into Helen Hall Library, you can expect the unexpected where you will not only see patrons, young and old reading and engaging, but hear music and dogs barking their approval to their storytellers!

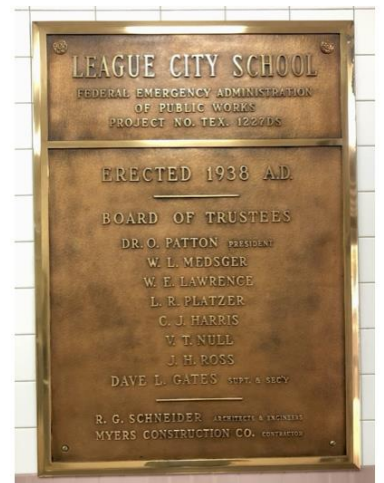
(Caris Brown, Kathie Nenninger, Teresa Potter and Meredith Layton contributed to this article.)

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Did you know League City School is being saved and repurposed?



America built many impressive projects through the Public Works Administration (PWA) implemented in the 1930's during the Great Depression - Hoover Dam, Lincoln Tunnel, and...League City School. Last summer, CCISD was considering demolition of League City's last remaining art deco building and PWA project but the City had the idea to save and repurpose the structure into a community center. Saving history



AND saving the tax payers millions is a WIN-WIN for League City. Looking forward to a Grand Opening sometime this summer! Remember to thank City Council Members and give kudos to City Staffers Sarah Greer Osborne and Ryan Smith for initiating and successfully driving this project to save League City history!



<https://bit.ly/3gMhaPt>

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Caris Brown, Helen Hall Local History Librarian

League City Historical Society member, Caris Brown, oversees local history at the Helen Hall Library. She collects, preserves and organizes archival materials that document the history of League City and its surrounding areas from indigenous peoples to the city's founders.

Caris's interest in history was part of her childhood. Her family traces its roots to Green Dewitt, who founded the town of Gonzales, which was the site of the first skirmish of the Texas Revolution during the 1830s.

Her favorite artifact is *Birds-eye view of League City*, a 6-by-4-foot, 123-year-old wall hanging, painted on handkerchief cotton, portraying League City (at the age of two years) and the adjoining Galveston County. It was envisioned and created by "house, sign and ornamental and paper hanger," J.M. Mahaffey in 1898. It is currently on display in the Local History Room.

Caris has a history degree from the University of Houston and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Sciences with an area of study in archives. Prior to coming to Helen Hall Library in 2008, she worked as an archivist for History Associates, a Washington D.C. company that provides historian and archive services for the Library of Congress, the National Institutes of Health, Independence Park in Philadelphia and various other clients including museums, congressional offices, and corporations.



Above: Local History Librarian, Caris Brown gets ready to scan a 1910 photo of League City's baseball team, The League City Browns.

Stay Tuned For More News on Meetings w' Music By Tucker Hart!in next months issue!



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LCHS Recognized!

LCHS was recognized by Councilman Nick Long on his Nick Long for Mayor FB page Jan. 28 and on the Convention and Visitors Bureau website February 2021 highlighting an article in our newsletter written by Joyce Zongrone "Birdseye-View Painting in the Local History Room at Helen Hall library.

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Barbara Vermillion (July 4, 1941 – January 13, 2022)



Last month we had to say good bye to another one of our members. Barbara Vermillion joined the Historical Society in 2001 and served as a faithful volunteer at the museum until 2018. Barbara met everyone with smiles and a pleasant spirit. She shared her joy of life which made her lots of fun in the office. Barbara worked in the museum office doing a variety of jobs. Being a former teacher, she loved watching the children pass by the office door as they marched to the music of the player piano and many times would go out and talk to them as they were ready to leave. We send our prayers to her children and family knowing her memories will live through them.

Your Support is Needed & Appreciated

The League City Historical Society depends heavily on membership dues for funding. We are a nonprofit and have no staff, relying strictly on volunteers. It's that time of year when we ask everyone to renew their membership. During the Pandemic your Society has managed to remain active within CDC guidelines and even expanded its outreach. New outdoor activities developed like our popular "Walkabouts" in the Historic District has kept the city's history at the forefront at a time when indoor meetings were not possible.

The One Room School House Hands on History in-person classes were put on hold during 2020 & 2021. This eliminated tuition fees normally earned. This challenge is being turned into an opportunity with the introduction of a new "distance learning" program that has already seen a successful pilot.

The Society enjoyed collaboration in 2021 with a host of organizations. Among those were the City of League City's Media & Communications Department. Their efforts to use the city's social media, newsletter, and web to promote events helped reach a large audience. We worked with the Fire Department to establish an archive of all their old photos. Collaborative efforts were initiated with Holiday in the Park, Helen Hall Library Children's Story Time, League City PD National Night Out, Boy Scouts, Bay Area Houston Ballet Nutcracker Scavenger Hunt, and the Daughters of the American Revolution in support of Laying of the Wreath's at Fairview Cemetery.

Last year we put the final touches on our web site LeagueCityHistory.org and kept both of our Facebook pages active and filled with information at Facebook.com/LeagueCityHistory and the West Bay Common School Children's Museum at Facebook.com/WestBayOneRoomSchool/.

To continue and grow our Society we need your support! Just click to join!

[Membership — League City Historical Society \(leaguecityhistory.org\)](https://LeagueCityHistory.org)

Virtual Classes On Our New Network

... And the grant that made it possible

Since Covid came around, and a school in California asked us to do 2 virtual schoolhouse sessions, we have been planning how to expand our program virtually with students from across the country. As you may remember from a newsletter article last year, that experience showed us how weak our WIFI infrastructure was and that we needed to upgrade it. We immediately switched our ISP (Internet Service Provider) to Comcast and greatly increased our speed to be able to handle the new Zoom load. We got a Router/Modem combination (called a Gateway) from Comcast and it handles both the connectivity to the internet (the Modem) and then turning that into a WIFI signal (the Router) that you can use wirelessly throughout your house or in this case the Museum.

That was only half of the story; we still had our Router/Modem buried in the back corner of a concrete building with a metal roof. That does not bode well for roaming the schoolyard, videoing the program with a camera that is *live* broadcasting over the internet. Sorry if you get bored easily with GEEK talk, it gets better. There is a fairly new technology called Mesh Routers that can replace the single Router in our Comcast unit. It replaces the single router with a group of routers that interact with each other, all the time acting like one router throughout our Museum grounds. Each router receives the signal from the next closest one and rebroadcasts it. As you walk around the property, your phone/camera/iPad will automatically switch from one to the next as the signal gets weaker or stronger.



In order to get our signal out of the 40x40 foot concrete and metal box we call the Barn Museum, we needed to head out the front windows to the schoolyard. So we had Comcast turn off just the “router” side of their unit and still used the modem side with our new mesh router system. In this case we used 3 routers (you can use up to 6), the first one is at the original location in the back corner of the Bus Barn and it transmits throughout the building. A second router, in the front window area receives and retransmits the signal out the window to the front schoolyard. A third router, inside the schoolhouse does the same for that building and the Garden

Classroom/well pump area, as seen above. We now have a strong signal throughout our whole property when we present the school program online. 150 feet from the original router.

This was all made possible by a wonderful grant from **Humanities Texas** that covers all aspects of developing our virtual program, and was procured for us by Ronnie Richards. You will hear more stories in future newsletters as we progress through our Virtual Program development using this grant.





Again,... congratulations to Helen Hall Library on it's 50th Anniversary .

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PRESERVE HISTORY & HAVE FUN !



Above: LCHS Member Kathie Nenninger and a young friend enjoying "Neighborhood Storytime" in the LCHS Garden Classroom.

**League City Historical Society
2021 Officers**

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Doug McKee | President |
| Richard Lewis | Vice President |
| Amber Murphy | Secretary |
| Katie Benoit Hake | Treasurer |

2021 Directors

- | | |
|------------------|----------|
| Diana Dornak | Director |
| Helen Hodges | Director |
| Darryl Krogman | Director |
| Catharin Lewis | Director |
| Linda Michael | Director |
| Michael Peterson | Director |
| Susan Pierce | Director |
| Ronnie Richards | Director |



If You Are Not A Member, We Are Hoping You Will Join!!

League City Historical Society

Thank you for being a member. The various types of memberships with the associated dues are listed below. To renew your membership or become a new member, select the membership level that is best for you, complete the form and mail to:

LCHS, PO Box 1642, League City Texas 77574

CATEGORY

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/ Active Military | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60 and over) | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single (Individual) | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Patron | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership | \$400 |

BUSINESS CATEGORY

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Member | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Partner | \$200 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Leader | \$300 |

Please update your membership information here:

Name _____

(For 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 your newsletter, meeting minutes and/or meeting notices by email, to help save postage.
- Check if we may list your name and address in our membership directory. This publication will only be distributed to LCCHS members and will not be used on our website.

Please Note: Membership is for one year and covers you until January 2023.