



Remember When.....



Above: Ernest Randall - "Ernie" was one of our site managers at the T. J. Dick Home during the Historic Homes Tour in 2011.



Above: Diane Gillette was a site manager at the Butler Building during the 2009 Historic Homes Tour.

From The President



Greetings From Colorado!

Charlene and I are in Greeley, Colorado visiting Grandson Travis, wife Shoshanna, 7 month old great grand-daughter Cambria, and 5 year old great grandson Aison. We miss being in Texas but love the mountains,-- especially Estes Park.

Thanks to all who served in our military and especially to those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today.

God bless the USA.

Love to all,

See you Memorial Day,

Doug McKee, President.

# 🌿🌸 Transforming Your Landscape With Native Plants 🌻🌿

On Saturday, May 8th, Patricia Steinke from the Native Plant Society of Texas Clear Lake Chapter came out to the museum to educate folks about native plants and the many benefits of using them in our landscapes.

Amazing instructor with so much information and inspiration! Guess what kind of garden is going to be planted at your favorite One Room Schoolhouse? Coming this fall!



# Memorial Day 2021

LCCHS is partnering with the City of League City for the Memorial Day event on Monday, May 31st. After the ceremony at Fairview Cemetery, guests will be invited to the museum grounds to come and go from 11 am to 2 pm. A Memorial Garden will frame the One Room Schoolhouse and guests will be welcome to personalize and place a poppy along the garden trellis. This will be an opportunity to remember as well as to teach. Our six windows of history, on the side of the Bus Barn Museum, will tell the story of the past 100 years of war and conflict. The Garden Classroom will feature "In Flanders Fields" and explain the importance of the poppy and how it has come to symbolize soldiers who have died in battle. Displays of League City's Gold Star Families will be presented as well as more detailed information about our League City veterans. Several guides in period clothing will help guests explore the displays and place poppies in the garden. Cool water and lemonade will be provided and served by the City of League City staff.

**Everyone is welcome!** If you would like to volunteer for this event, please send an email to [leaguacityxhistory@gmail.com](mailto:leaguacityxhistory@gmail.com) and let us know how you would like to help.



\* \* \* \* \*

Remember when .....



Mrs. Poke and her daughter helped at the Historic Homes Tour when the Friends Church was on the Homes Tour. Mrs. Poke's dress and bonnet added so much to the festivities!

## Nana's Attic Was Home to grandparents of League City's first Mayor

*By Joyce Zongrone*

Nana's Attic, League City's popular, family-owned boutique in Founders' Square, was originally the home of the city's first mayor's grandparents, Ursula "Dora" and Giuseppe "Joe" Arolfo.

Mayor Johnnie Louis Arolfo's grandparents left their native land of Italy, the town of Cercenasco, 16 miles south of the metropolitan city of Turin, in the [Italian](#) region of [Piedmont](#), shortly after the birth of their first child, Caterina "Katie," born August 27, 1896. They travelled to La Havre, France and boarded the *La Bretagne* to New York on February 2, 1897. After arriving at Ellis Island, they took the train to Galveston. Family oral histories say they stayed on the train until the end of the line because they had food and water. The family lived in Hitchcock for a short time which was a thriving dairy and produce mecca. Later they relocated to Dickinson with the help of the Italian consul in Galveston, Clemente Nicolini, who owned property there. They bought several blocks in the Robert Hall Survey of the Nicholstone Addition and became celery farmers, working from sunrise to sunset to achieve their American dream. They moved into the small frame house on the property that would become Nana's Attic almost a hundred years later in 1995. On December 10, 1898, they welcomed their first child born in America, Lawrence "Chino" Arolfo, the father of League City's first mayor, Johnnie Louis Arolfo, born May 23, 1923, died December 1995, at age 72.



Nana's Attic – Founders Square

There are no records of the home's journey from Dickinson to League City, but the area where it was housed, has an interesting history. The rural neighborhood included Hall Street, north of the Dickinson city limits and north of the intersection of 20<sup>th</sup> Street East (formerly Hall Street) with California Street. In the early 1960's, the site was used for the unpermitted disposal of chemical waste dumped in shallow pits or on the ground.

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(Nana's Attic Was Home to grandparents of League City's first Mayor – continued)

Drums containing waste were buried in shallow ditches and later covered with soil. The tar and sludge sometimes caught fire. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, TCEQ, declared it a Superfund site in 1986 with the final cleanup occurring 27 years later in 2013.

The Arolfos went on to have three more children: Antoinette (1900-1961), Dominick (1901-1968) and Theresa Beatrice (1904-1973). Tragedy struck in 1906, when Giuseppe died, less than ten years after his arrival in the United States. The story told was that Giuseppe died from internal injuries sustained in a fight in a local tavern when another man shoved him into a table that had a sharp edge. Young Ursula was left with the burden of the farm and five young children. Six years after her husband's death, in 1912, Ursula perished from complications following an emergency appendectomy, leaving 16-year-old Katie to raise the family.

Six months after her mother's death, Katie married John Milutin who was 23. The *1930 Census* later listed Milutin's occupation as a screwman. *A screwman is a stevedore who stows compressed cotton-bales in the holds of vessels by means of a device called a screw.* Saddled with four young children, ranging in age from eight to fourteen, and a new husband, community rumors began about sending the children back to Italy, although all of them, except Katie, were born here and were American citizens. A local family, the Bogattas, offered to help and arranged for all of them to remain in Dickinson with the stipulation they go to an orphanage.

However, only Theresa and Antoinette went to the orphanage. Lawrence and Dominic ran away. Dominic worked on a farm until he married, and Lawrence joined the Navy.

Right: Pictured is the Arolfo Home, which was to become Nana's Attic, on moving day, in October 1995.



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(Nana's Attic Was Home to grandparents of League City's first Mayor – continued.)

John and Katie lived and raised their five children in the house, except for two short periods of time when they lived in Kemah and then in Angleton. They added two rooms to the original structure to accommodate their five children, Jennie, Lewis, Anthony, Joseph and John Jr. John Sr. passed away in 1971 and Katie remained in her childhood home until her death in 1992. In October 1995, John Jr. donated his childhood home to League City where it became Nana's Attic.

The family-owned gift shop was started by Marie Benoit Sesher. Her sister and co-owner, Katie Benoit Hake, is a League City Historical Society Board member. The sisters grew up in historical homes in Detroit and League City and love doing business in one. They feel they are helping to pass along their appreciation of history to another generation.

In the past 25 years they have been doing business in this historic home, members of the Arolfo family have come by to show off their Grandma's house. The only change in the originally 650 square-foot home came after it was moved to Founders' Square. The developers enlarged the door of the bedroom into an open arch and added dormers.

The Benoit sisters are creating their own history in the house. The shop was opened after Marie's first daughter, Stanzie was born and Marie's second daughter, Gabrielle, took her first steps in the shop.

The Arolfo home is Nana's Attic's third location. Its' other two sites were also historic homes. Nana's has been in business for 30 years and at this location over 25 years.

Katie Benoit Hake says, "It seemed like fate that Katie Arolfo was the last owner of the house and now another Katie enjoys the space. "

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**The Nana's Girls** - from left to right, Ginny (Nana) Benoit, Katie Benoit Hake, Marie Benoit Sesher, Gabrielle Sesher Nonmacher, and front, Stanzie Sesher.

(Nana's Attic Was Home to grandparents of League City's first Mayor – continued.)

Below are photos of the original Arolfo home before it was restored and became what is now Nanna's Attic.



The original bedroom



The original porch.



The original entry.



The original living room.



An original interior room.

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### Teddy Bear Parade Canceled



The Teddy Bear Parade usually, held on July 4<sup>th</sup>, is being canceled because we do not want to put children at an unnecessary risk while the pandemic is still around. Hopefully next year we can have this great event again.

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The original kitchen.



# League City Memorial Day

**MAY 31**

10 a.m.

## Fairview Cemetery

\*Parking at Fire Station  
Drill Field at 718 N. Kansas Ave.

A short ceremony will honor those in our community who have died during military service.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## League City Historical Society

210 N. Kansas Ave.

\*Limited on-site parking is available with  
additional parking at Butler's Courtyard

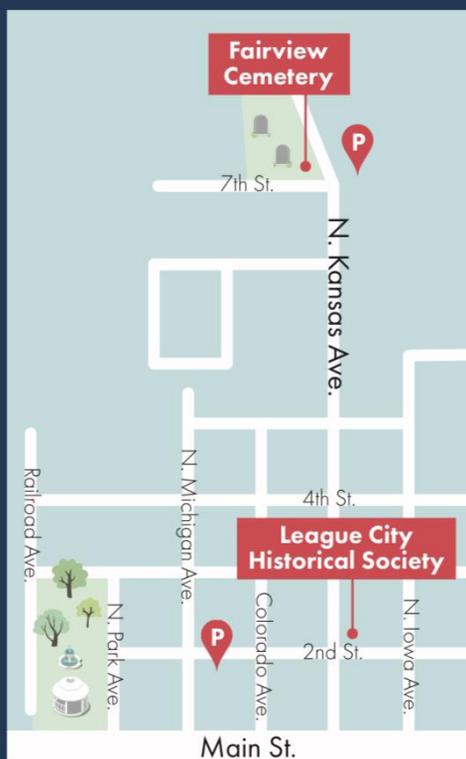
Families are welcome to visit the grounds for an outdoor learning experience that tells the story of the past 100 years of war and conflict. Living history re-enactors will explain the significance of League City's Gold Star families and the meaning and symbolism of the poppy. Water and lemonade will be served.

Noon to 2 p.m.

## American Legion Post 554

1650 Highway 3

Complimentary hot dog lunch with chips and soft drinks.



### Inscribe a poppy

honoring someone who died during active military service as part of a **"Garden of Memories"**

interactive art display on the grounds of the historical society.



## Great Spring and Summer Fun In League City!!!

Board of Director member Michael Peterson sent some wonderful pictures from the past few weekends in League City. He said he wanted to share with everyone the excitement occurring in the historical area of League City.

These pictures show the nice crowds enjoying the Sunday events in League Park every Sunday in the month of May. This is so good that the city put this together when the weather has been so nice. Huge family event!!



Above: Lots of people are enjoying the Sunday events in League Park!



Above: Last Friday night there were movies in the park at Butler Long Horn Museum!

**\*For City of League City scheduled events check the City website, City Matters and other social media sources.**

## 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
Deborah Gammon	Director
Helen Hodges	Director
Darryl Krogman	Director
Catharin Lewis	Director
Linda Michael	Director
Michael Peterson	Director
Susan Pierce	Director
Ronnie Richards	Director

**Welcome New Members !!**



**Patricia & Jeff Richards**

**Michael & Coyleen Schmitt**

**More upcoming events...  
see below!**



## MURDER & MAYHEM IN LEAGUE CITY

Take a WALKabout thru the streets of  
Historic League City and visit turn  
of the century crime scenes.  
Coming in July...



## "Native Plant Gardens"

Coming Soon!

Want to help? Email:

[Katie@leaguecitytxhistory@gmail.com](mailto:Katie@leaguecitytxhistory@gmail.com)





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 2022.