

# Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

Volume 2, Issue 1

PAPHA Newsletter

January 2008

## PAPHA and town moves forward through history

As the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association continues to work toward the move of the Mercer House to Alister Street next to the Community Center, the Community Center is getting more than a face-lift, courtesy of the Boatmen, the City of Port Aransas and a group of community members who care.

With members of the Port Aransas Boatmen Inc. organizing volunteers, and Tom Dasch acting as general contractor, the community showed up and pitched in to continue the remodeling work being done on the Port Aransas Community Center.

The Boatmen set the work day Saturday, Jan. 12, and town folks did not disappoint. Instead, they brought work tools and a willing spirit and went to work as a community.

Volunteers ripped off siding and per-

formed small jobs that did not require professionals, only willing laborers.

Work has been in the process for a while, beginning with the replacement of pilings under the building, then sanding down the floors inside.

Contractors are in the process of replacing the siding.

Other planned renovations to be done include refinishing the floors, redoing the kitchen and bathrooms and add insulation to the attic.

The Boatmen donated the land for the building to the city and were the major workforce in the original construction of the Community Center from clearing the land to putting the building together. The group is behind the current renovation with the city supplying much of the materials.

City Manager Michael Kovacs said volunteers providing labor for work not

needed to be done by a contractor are keeping the cost of the project much lower.

Another community work day is expected to be arranged in the spring when volunteers could help with other aspects.

Built in 1949, the Community Center was for decades the center of Port Aransas social life, seeing events ranging from fishing tournaments to wedding receptions. The project aims at completely refinishing the rebuilding, which languished for years with insufficient maintenance.

Plans call for the center to be joined eventually by the Mercer house, a historic Port Aransas home that will be moved from its current location at Roberts and Oleander streets to the Community Cen-

See 'Community Center' on Page 4



### Stripped down

Though the Community Center is looking a little naked right now, it soon will sport a new look.



### PAPHA Financials

As of Jan. 8:  
 \$1,067.55 in operating account  
 \$57,756.30 in Building account

### Calendar of Events

- Jan. 24 ..... Vote A Boat
- Jan. 24 ..... Charlie's Pasture
- Jan. 25-26.....Digology
- Feb. 16.....Photo Race
- Feb. 25.....Chocolate Caching

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## Pennings by Pam

Everyone, residents, Winter Texans and visitors, are invited to participate in all of the PAPHAs activities scheduled in the next few months.

Check the website, [www.portausa.com](http://www.portausa.com), for news; sign up for e-mail newsletters and event reminders; read the *South Jetty* for details on upcoming events.

Then join in ... we want you to be a part of us as we make and preserve history.

[www.portausa.com](http://www.portausa.com)

## The Oval (or awful) Office By President John Fucik

### RESERVATIONS ON PRESERVATION?? READ ON...

A newspaper article on a workshop for the Port Aransas City Council on July 13, 2004, reported the Council was committed to adopt policies that would "contribute to the long-term sustainability of our community." It went on to state the Council's focus statement defined "Port Aransas' unique qualities as a barrier island environment (with) a 'fishing village' ambiance". A sustainable resource is one that's either inexhaustible or one that is renewed or replenished at a rate equal to or greater than it is consumed.

An economic resource that meets this criteria is our community history, though too many people fail to see history as a resource. This is a particularly shortsighted viewpoint in an area where the economy is heavily tourist

## 2006 Financial Report

<b>Income</b>	
Contribution Board	8,630.00
Contribution - Other	9,733.85
<b>Total Contribution</b>	<b>18,363.85</b>
Fund Raising	2,388.52
Grants	10,000.00
Membership	710.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>31,462.37</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
Festival	2,447.97
Office Expense	1,085.36
Survey	7,125.25
Workshop	997.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>11,655.58</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>19,806.79</b>

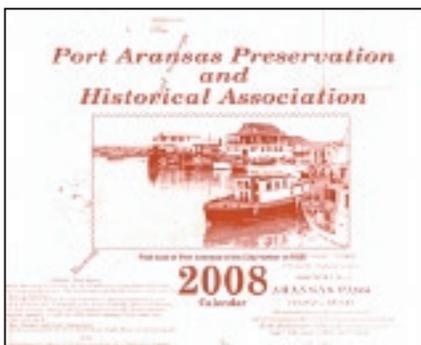
## 2007 Financial Report

<b>Income</b>	
Book Signing	29.47
<b>Contribution</b>	
Board	10,383.00
Contribution - Other	9,136.86
<b>Total Contribution</b>	<b>19,519.86</b>
<b>Fund Raising</b>	
Bricks	8,415.00
Old Town Festival	489.00
Painting Raffle-Reed	2,920.00
Fund Raising - Other	5,048.76
<b>Total Fund Raising</b>	<b>16,872.76</b>
Grant	16,500.00
<b>Membership</b>	
Business	175.00
Century	500.00
Decade	100.00
Epoch	150.00
Family	885.00
Individual	240.00
Lifetime	5,000.00
Total Membership	7,050.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>59,972.09</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
Dues & Subscriptions	150.00
Festival	718.80
<b>Office Expense</b>	
Advertising	160.94
Bank Service Charge	5.00
Grant Purchase	4,359.91
Museum Design	2,000.00
Postage	38.00
Rent	7,500.00
Supplies	124.48
Merchandise	2,350.29
Web Site	219.00
Office Expense - Other	1,172.42
<b>Total Office Expense</b>	<b>17,930.04</b>
Survey	4,369.75
<b>Utilities</b>	
Electricity	1,787.89
Lawn	733.00
Telephone	198.98
Trash	266.90
Water	478.66
<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>3,465.43</b>
Workshop	55.38
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>26,689.40</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>33,282.69</b>
<b>Other Income</b>	
Interest	17.37
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>17.37</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>33,300.06</b>

## Whoops!

Credit for research for the Tarpon Club article last month should have included Mark Young.

Send Letters to the Editor to:  
[rattraxx@centurytel.net](mailto:rattraxx@centurytel.net)



Get your 2008 PAPHAs calendar at [www.portausa.com](http://www.portausa.com)

oriented.

Usually it takes the vision and energy of a special individual or group to recognize the value of preserving and rehabilitating some historic resource which then opens the eyes of the doubters and foot-draggers. The restoration and/or conversion to new use of one or two historic buildings often leads to the renewal of whole districts (i.e. downtown San Antonio; neighborhoods – Lockerby Square, Indianapolis; and even whole towns, Williamsburg, VA.) Generally these "once historic cast-offs" become vibrant economic entities.

Also it is not uncommon for people outside a community to recognize and appreciate the uniqueness, charm or value of a community or villages history. When the border town of Roma, Texas was chosen as the background for the film, "Viva Zapata", a lot more local citizens saw their town in a new light and when some outsiders chose the historic old mill in Gruene, TX to feature country performers and dancing, the whole village realized the historic benefits.

A community should, of course, preserve and value its history for its own sake, but if there are economic and other positive side benefits, so much the better.

Besides banking on history, it's also nice to take history to the bank!

## Farley boat voting ends Thursday

Take a trip though Port A and choose, in your opinion, the best looking Farley boat. Then cast your vote and see who agrees with you. Voting ends Thursday, Jan. 24, in the Vote A Boat contest.

Working together, the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association (PAPHA) and the Port Aransas Parks and Recreation Department partnered on a project allowing the general public to select the best Farley boat planter in town.

In an effort to bring more awareness of the boats and the original boat builders who created them in Port Aransas in the early to mid 1900s, the project was born.

The two groups hope this venture



Above is a PAPHA archive photo of Bill Moore's Farley boat in days of old. Below is one of the first decorated Farley boat planters in Port Aransas.



will encourage all planter owners to do a little spring cleaning, so to speak, and dress the planters up, either with paint touch-ups or new plantings.

Hurry over to pick up Farley boat packet that includes a list of locations, a map of where boats are located and ballots. The packets are available at the Chamber of Commerce at 403 W. Cotter Ave., parks department at 739 W. Ave. A and city hall, at 710 W. Ave. A.

Participants can vote on the best planted and most creative.

Drop completed ballots off at city hall or the parks department.

The Farley family is linked to the wooden fishing boats that helped make

the city famous as a fishing destination. It has had roots in Port Aransas since near the turn of the last century,

The Garden Club brought back the boats by commissioning an artist to create a mold and make the planters as a fund-raiser for the club.

The history of the Farley family in Port Aransas began in 1910, when Barney Farley set foot on the island with his wife Marie and their two sons, Ray and Barney Jr. He was a fisherman and guide.

The boats came later, in 1915, when Barney's brother, Charles Frederick Farley moved to Port A and opened Fred Farley and Sons, Boat Builders. This was where the boats originated, created by C.F., who designed and built them.

The boats made by the firm were "the" boats of their day and built from scratch with no written plans.

Two of his sons, James and Fred Farley, carried on the legacy by building boats through the late 1960s. Another son, Don, was a fisherman and guide.

Barney and his nephew, Don, took President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his son Elliott fishing in a Farley boat in May of 1937.

Farley boats were made for many anglers in Port Aransas as well as those who made the trip to have boats commissioned. They were prevalent in the Tarpon Rodeo, which later became the Deep Sea Roundup.

The planters are about 6.5 feet long, 2.5 feet wide, and weigh about 1,800 pounds. The outside has a wood grain texture look. The Farley boat name is on both sides and Port Aransas, Texas, is on the "transom". Two planting areas are inside the boats.

The club is selling the boats for \$350 each.

Anyone interested in purchasing a planter may contact Chris Arneson at the Port Aransas Business Center, 600 Cut Off Rd., Ste. 1 or by calling Arneson at (361) 749-6291.

***It's time to pay your annual membership dues for 2008. Dues are valid Jan. - Dec.***

## The First Mustang Islanders

BY

JOHN G. FORD

The humans who first inhabited Texas arrived twelve thousand years ago and culturally evolved into nine groups. One of these, the Karankawa, were hunter/gatherers living on the coast from Padre to Galveston Island. The Karankawa were on the islands during the cool months subsisting on oysters and fish, while during the warm months they moved inland and to hunt deer and bison and gather berries.

Karankawa had these personal and cultural features. They lived in family centered bands and had a fondness for canines—"Karankawa" means dog lover. Because of the men's large size and strength, other Indians referred to the Karankawa as "the wrestlers." These Native Texans revered two deities; and, as did other Texas tribes, they practiced ceremonial cannibalism (e.g., consuming enemies to acquire their strengths).

These are notable historical facts about the Karankawa. They were Texas' most skilled bowmen; no small feat given other experts like the Comanche, the blood enemy of the Karankawa. The Karankawa interacted amicably with the first Europeans to set foot in Texas (in 1528); but that friendliness was absent twenty-six years later when they massacred shipwrecked Spaniards in an infamy called the Flight of the Three Hundred. Despite attempts by clerics and other cultural agencies, the Karankawa failed to adapt to mission life and European based society. A fierce sense of autonomy and this fact of geography proved a fatal mix for the Karankawa: Their lands lay directly in the path of the great Anglo-American influx during the 1820s and '30s. Decades of warfare and white men's diseases sorely decimated the Karankawa. They tried to regroup in Mexico, but various aggressions there caused them to be expelled.

In 1858, the last Karankawa band was attacked and annihilated near Rio Grande City. A people as wild and untamed as the coastal places they inhabited slipped forever beneath the sands of time.

## PACT performance is about old Port A

“A Mostly True History of Port Aransas, Texas” is being performed at the Port Aransas Community Theatre (PACT).

Night performances are at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 24 and Saturday, Jan. 26; and Thursday through Saturday, Jan 31 through Feb. 2 and Feb. 7-9. Matinees will be held on Sundays, Jan. 27 and Feb. 10, at 2:30 p.m. No performances will be held Friday, Jan. 25.

The original script written by Jane Bull evolved from a vignette she created as a fund-raiser for PAPHA several years ago. She wrote an expanded version which became this production.

Her frequent stage partner, Katie Crysups-Sikes, agreed to direct her mentor’s labor of love, a long-distance collaboration, because Jane now lives in San Antonio. Jane enjoyed conducting extensive research and interviewing dozens of local folks and former residents to compose a humorous retrospective of a colorful and charming community. The characters and events are not necessarily representative of actual people and history.

The play covers a period when the native Karankawa Indians lived on the island to present day. The primary setting



Photo from the PAPHA archives

## The Hangout

This cafe is featured in a scene from the PACT play about Port Aransas. It was a popular place in its heyday.

and music come from the 1950s and 1960s, with several original scores.

A most unusual narrator named Hurri Cane, a fictional timeless character who has seen it all, holds the action together, Bull said.

The cast includes Phyllis Layne, Ginny Shaw, Jack Dreessen, Eric Hawes, Laura Crocker, Bill McKinney, Chloe Tugwell, Margaret “Marg” Paton, Ashley Gant and Crysups-Sikes.

A special segment will feature Betty Crawford as the late Patsy Jones singing, “That’s My Island”. Jones wrote the song that was later adopted as the Port Aransas city song.

PAPHA encourages the public to enjoy a night with a glimpse of old Port A.

## Community Center

Continued from Page 1

ter grounds.

Meanwhile, the property the Mercer house will be set on will begin to be made ready for the house to change addresses and become a museum.

The sale of Brick Pavers to line the walkways to the museum and Community Center have been steady, with many wanting to help the museum become a reality as they leave their mark for posterity.

Memorialize a loved one or recognize a business, an organization or your family in stone for posterity with a paver. The 4-inch by 8-inch pavers include three lines of laser engraving with each line limited to 14 characters. A brick paver in their name is also a way to honor those living or who have passed on.

The brick pavers may be ordered with an order form on the PAPHA website, [www.portausa.com](http://www.portausa.com) or by contacting Betty Bundy at 361-749-3406.

It is not too late to order PAPHA 2008 calendars or other PAPHA merchandise.

Calendars cost \$15 and may be purchased at the *South Jetty* newspaper, Family Center IGA, Gratitude and Port Aransas Business Center.

PAPHA totes cost \$12 and can be ordered from the PAPHA website or by calling 361-749-3800.

Photos are available in all sizes as well as on mugs, mouse pads, key chains, t-shirts and more by clicking on the **Big Blue Button**.

Also on the website are order forms for membership applications and fund donations.

## Digology set Saturday, Jan. 26

Learn all about archeological digs as the Port Aransas Parks and Recreation Department holds its fifth “ology” program Saturday, Jan. 26.

The Digology will begin at 9 a.m. in the Pollock Center, 129 S. Alister St., for a brief talk about how an archeological dig is performed.

The dig will be located at a predetermined site in Charlie’s Pasture. It will include making a grid, mapping the grid and site, digging and unearthing artifacts, and cataloging artifacts.

After the dig, which will run until noon, and a break for lunch on site, the event will resume about 12:45 p.m. and run until around 2 p.m.

Artifacts will be taken to the Pollock Center for washing. Participants will discuss what they found.

Learning the basics of an archeological

dig and finding out what can be found in Charlie’s Pasture, analyzing and recording data is the object of the digology.

Participants should wear clothes that can get dirty and that are warm, as most of the day will be spent out of doors. Bring a lunch, snacks and water, and something to sit on while taking breaks.

Hiking for the event will be limited to about 20 feet, as participants will drive to the site. The ground around the area is fairly flat and comprised of soft sand/clay.

Everyone is invited to join in and with the variety of jobs to choose from, even those who can’t do strenuous labor can participate. Jobs will include digging, sifting, recording, measuring, dusting and more.

Anyone with questions may call Rachael King at 749-4158.