

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

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PAPHA Newsletter

June 2008

The Museum Beginning: On Location At Last

BY BETTY BUNDY

The "MUSEUM TO BE" is on location! It is snugly tied down to a new foundation; evidence that it is really is going to materialize is there for all to see; however the job has just begun. Granted it looks a bit shabby and needs a lot of refurbishing, but work has started and will continue now at a more rapid, though not always visible, pace. Last week workers were underneath the building, setting plates, tightening bolts, securing it to the foundation that

Mayor Brown assures us will be there for much longer than 100 years. Now is the time for everyone, PAPHA members, local business owners, weekend residents and frequent or not so frequent visitors to stand up and become part of the effort. Everyone that lives in, loves or prospers from the community activities stands to benefit, economically, educationally, and esthetically. Everyone that lives in, loves or prospers from the community needs to join the

effort to complete the vision. In 1999, Rutgers University, Texas Perspectives and the LBJ School of Public Affairs prepared a report on the Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Texas. They found that preservation creates jobs, because not all of the work can be done by willing volunteers. It rebuilds communities and attracts tourists. According to the report, Texas heritage attracts local travelers, with 11% of all travelers being heritage travelers. Now 10 years later, the number is much larger. Texas ranks just below California in Heritage tourism. History museums draw both tourists and economic activity. Even history museums in the smallest communities across the state attract thousands of visitors annually who spend in the billions. The heritage tourist is usually older (maybe baby boom age), comes more often, stays longer and spends more money. A history museum, in short, is worth the



From the President BY SHARON STRICKER

Thanks to everyone who made the acquisition and the move of the Mercer house possible. What a great sight to see when you drive along Alister. I sometimes felt like I was watching the grass grow since it was such a slow process to move the house to its foundation. I'm sure some people thought that those of us that set up shop watching the movers set the house thought we must be very bored with nothing to do. However, it was so interesting to

watch what artists the movers are. Our museum/home is now located in the heart of Old Town Port A, adjacent to our newly rehabbed Community Center (circa 1940), and our very popular Computer Center housed in a building once used as the town jail. These three very popular, very historic structures will all face the same courtyard, meticulously created and installed by the Port A Garden Club and all fronting on our main street. A street well traveled by our approximately 1,000,000 visitors each year. Some people believe the house to be an eyesore and others think it is a grand old house sitting in a grand new place. Whatever their feelings, it will some

day be a gathering place for all to see the history of Port A. The board is very busy developing the story lines for the exhibits, working with contractors to ready the interior for the exhibits, and restore the outside of our house. The Board appreciates your patience, after all, this is an island and we are dealing with island time. Betty Bundy and I attended "GROW YOUR MONEY TREE"- DIALOGUE WITH DONORS 2008" - a workshop in San Antonio last month that enabled us to meet face-to-face with many potential donors for our project. Funders making presentations included: AFP President and AFP Past Presi-

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Highs and Lows of Island History Part II

BY JOHN G. FORD

The island's nine expansion and contraction cycles were described in Part I. Here, I discuss the historical contractors of Cataclysmic Weather, Social-Economic Factors, and Vehicular Inaccessibility.

Weather wise, draught challenged the 1950s expansion by spoiling island water wells. The weather variable on the coast, of course, is the powerful hurricane which, despite a boon to the building sector, is a massive setback to island expansion (e.g., the cataclysmic 1919, 1961, 1970 storms).

Social-Economic contractors include three wars. It is dubious enemy incursions (Civil War) or loss of maritime trade (World War I) will again impact the island, however the gasoline rationing of WW II is realistic for another major conflict. And on that topic, will some gas price threshold (maybe the \$6-7 gallon) keep visitors away from the island? Economic catastrophes comparable to the other S-E contractors, the Great Depression and deep 1980s recession, would obviously contract island expansion.



To create the jetties they placed the stones, then made the cement walkway.

Vehicular Inaccessibility harks back to the poor access the motoring public had to the island until the late 1920s. This contractor still looms because extant systems (SH-361, ferry) are ill suited for handling the numbers of projected incoming vehicles.

VI has a spin-off. When the 19 current—and surely there will be more—single family housing projects fill with baby boomer retirees, thousands of resident vehicles will be added to the island roll. Mustang's tiny matrix of transportation arteries will be clogged, creating the Vehicular Morass, a well documented stressor. Problem solving is needed now; if contractors of the

quality of island life are not dealt with, then the next generation will justifiably point to our inept and avarice centered stewardship. Of what value are wads of dollars if one's living space becomes utterly spoiled?

Beginning

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investment. An investment in the place you live and earn your livelihood garners more benefits for families than a share of Exxon.

We hope everyone, from those who can invest only pennies to those who can make significant investment, will join PAPHA in raising the large amount of money that a first class 21st century, interactive interpretation of the Port Aransas story will take. We can do it alone, but it will take a lot longer to realize the inevitable benefits.

The Port Aransas Museum Needs

Clerical Help
Photographers
Moviemakers
Computer Programmers (to develop games)
Docents (students and adults)
Artists
Painters
Carpenters
Floor Sweepers
Creative Event Planners
Experienced Grant Writers
Greeters
Your talent
Your enthusiasm

Call 361-749-3406 to volunteer.



Gun mounts were sttioned in the dunes during WW II.

President

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dent, The AT&T Foundation, Broadway Bank Wealth Management, US Trust Bank of America Wealth Management, San Antonio Area Foundation, Community Foundation of Texas Hill Country, Bandera Community Foundation, Valero Energy Foundation, The Zachry Foundation, The USAA Foundation,

The Boeing Company, H.E.B. Grocery Company, Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), City of San Antonio- Cultural Affairs Office, Rackspace, Wells Fargo.

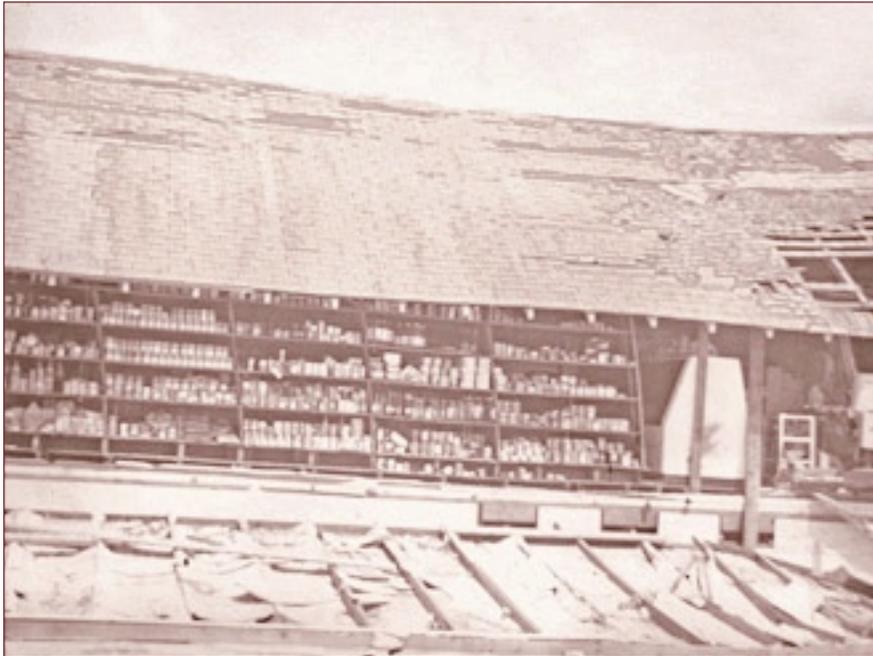
We met so many wonderful people that had been to Port A and simply love our town. We met one person who had

recently visited Port A for the first time. She did every tourist thing we have to do and can hardly wait for her husband to visit with her the next time. Another person did not know how she is going to manage it, but she wants to be in Port A when she dies.

Now that our house has been moved, we must: connect all utilities, install hurricane strapping, replace damaged wood under the porch, replace wall where fireplace was removed, rebuild chimney, replace wall and install door (ADA) in the kitchen area, repair dry-wall, new roof, tie roof rafters together, replace or repair flooring, clean-clean-clean, paint-paint-paint. We must start from the bottom and work our way up. Be assured that even if it looks like we are not doing anything, plenty is being accomplished, sometimes it just doesn't show.

Fortunately, we are blessed with a dedicated Board of Directors, fundraisers, donors and willing volunteers, many with backgrounds and skills in projects just like this one.

The Board welcomes your comments and concerns. We are just as anxious as you to see this grand old house restored to its full beauty and are working as hard and fast as we possibly can for the day we can open the doors to the general public.



Storm damage

Above is the P.A. Merchantile after a Hurricane Celia in 1970. The walls were knocked down, but the shelves remained stocked. At right is the red brick scholl house after the 1919 hurricane. Below is a truck going the the flood water in front of Bob's Cafe after a storm.

Photos from PAPHA photo files



**Hurricane
season began
June 1st.
Get prepared,
stay prepared!**

PAPHA Board Meeting Summary -- June 2, 2008

Board members present: Betty Bundy, Sylvia Buttler, Marilyn Cook, John Fucik, Mary Goodwin, Rick Pratt, Bruce Reynolds, Sharon Stricker.

Minutes of the May meeting were approved with minor corrections. Treasurer's Report: around \$41,800 will remain in campaign fund after paying house mover and museum design obligations.

Sharon Stricker requested approval of designating contributions received this year as Campaign 2008 Funds to reflect PAPHA's efforts and success (re: Mercer House move) and to increase interest and potential support from those attending the July fundraiser. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

1) With both sections of Mercer house in place, roof work can commence. We will likely have four bids from contractors for inside remodeling and rehabbing. Tom Dasch will finish all work that the City will cover. City will cover insurance until house is secure on foundations and Board should approve maximum for insurance to cover building after City's coverage ends.

2) Bank of America and Wells Fargo are potential sources for local grants; a \$13,000 grant application was made to Summerly Foundation. To date, 239 brick pavers and 15 of the 16x16 blocks have been sold. The price of bricks

for second order will be \$50 for brick pavers and \$300 for 16x16 blocks. Marilyn Cook will prepare a register of non-brick and small sum donors.

3) Sharon Stricker asked all Board members to contribute to museum project to show the Board's commitment before the July 2008 Fundraiser. The July Fundraiser is scheduled for the 26th at The Moorings. Rick Pratt, Gary Wilson and "Boo" Hauser will be speakers. Board members should submit names of potential invitees. Pam Greene will do invitations and pledge forms.

4) Newsletter: Get articles to Pam Greene by the 7th of each month. Betty Bundy stressed need for a logo. Rick Pratt and Nancy Phillips agreed to serve on logo committee. Doris Rump and Arlene Hughes might also serve.

5) John Fucik will work with the City of Port Aransas Parks and Recreation Department Community Program Coordinator Pam Greene for a partner project between PAPHA and the city.

6) Current membership stands at 149. Sylvia Buttler is working on forms/cards for membership and donor recognition. Sharon Stricker, Bruce Reynolds and John Fucik would review membership levels and dues structure.

7) The July fundraiser will be held in lieu of a July meeting, and no

general meeting will be held in August. Potential topics for the September meeting included something reflecting children's summer programs, music by Larry Joe Taylor, and a band concert by PAISD band(s).

8) Old Town Festival: based on 2008 activities, March 7, 2009 was chosen as the new date instead of holding one in November in 2008. Activities and donors were discussed.

9) Re: recognition of J. Guthrie Ford's contributions – Marilyn Cook and John Fucik would develop policy on criteria for and form of special recognitions.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Betty and Sharon briefed Board on the conference they attended in San Antonio and mentioned Betty, Sharon and Norris (Stricker) and Pam Greene would be attending a conference in Bastrop on Web site design.

2) Record of Board and other members' contributions of time and in-kind donations is needed.

3) Sharon would like to review outgoing correspondence

4) Betty mentioned Donnelly Pictorial History book program with motion made that Steve Roberts follow up on this program.

Board reviewed Museum Brochure until 10:30 PM when meeting was adjourned.



The ferry landing cost \$1 to cross before 1968. The ferry Nellie B served the island for many years.