

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

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PAPHA Newsletter

July 2008

Museum Building Project Update BY BRUCE REYNOLDS



The building work continues. PAPHA has spent \$30,201 through June 29, on the project.

The move cost \$16,000 and was done by Lara Moving.

A contractor insurance policy good for a year was acquired through the City of Port Aransas for a fee of \$1,742.

The building is on the foundation and completely reconnected after being moved in two pieces. The city paid for the labor, and PAPHA paid for the materials costing \$5,748.

The split in the roof was repaired by Port Enterprises Ltd. with the work donated.

The roof on the addition was rotted along the edge that parallels Brundrett Street. It was replaced at the same time

the fireplace hole in the roof was repaired at a cost of \$700.

A new roof was required on the add-on part of the house at an expense of \$1750 by Top Gun Roofing.

The front porch wood was severely rotted and required immediate attention to replace because it was the support for second floor and was sinking. This porch and underpinnings have been replaced at cost of \$4,260. In the move the front windows overlooking the porch were twisted to the point they would not open and close properly. This required removing and reinstalling them. This has been completed.

The back wall facing Brundrett Street has been repaired and sheathing placed on outside. The wall facing the Community Center has the studs and door opening framed in.

The rest of the old siding on that side was removed and proper strapping put in place. Then the sheathing and siding was installed.

Two fiberglass doors will be hung in the side and back. The roof eave on Brundrett Street will be installed. Several molding and trim boards around

Work Day Set

Help paint the museum on Saturday, July 19. Sign up at building site, or by e-mail to ggbun7@centurytel.net or the2ofus@stx.rr.com.

the windows will be replaced.

The roof junction of the sides facing Alister Street will be repaired. This additional work will cost \$8,700. We are now be ready to scrape, sandblast, caulk, and paint the outside.



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From the President

BY SHARON STRICKER

June was a very busy month for PAPHA. The Mercer house has been secured with hurricane straps as required by building code, and restoration of the exterior is well underway.

The PAPHA board thanks the roofers for completing their repairs in a timely manner. It certainly came just in time for the rain.

The front porch floor, steps and railing have been rebuilt as close to original as we can envision. A great job was done on the porch. Next will be the job of repairing the siding.

The design for the inside to accommodate the exhibits is well underway. Additional funds are needed to be raised for this portion of the rehabilitation, and help from the public will be greatly appreciated. PAPHA will continue to write grants, have fundraisers and accept your donations. Merchandise including t-shirts, tote bags, buttons and photographs are available for purchase. They make great gifts.

The landscaping by Port Aransas Garden Club members will soon begin. Our organization is grateful for the patience and attention to detail shown by the Garden Club. They have created a striking design and layout for the extensive landscaping that will enhance the development of our Museum, the Community Center and the Computer Center. These three very popular, very historic structures will all abut the same courtyard, meticulously created and installed by the Garden Club fronting on our main street. A street well traveled by our approximately 1,000,000 visitors each year.

PAPHA				
Statement of Financial Position				
As of July 3, 2008				
	<u>Jul 3, 08</u>	<u>Jul 3, 07</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Checking/Savings	20,276.68	5,972.90	14,303.78	239.5%
American Bank	21,865.32	30,282.20	-8,416.88	-27.8%
Campaign Fund				
Total Checking/Savings	<u>42,142.00</u>	<u>36,255.10</u>	<u>5,886.90</u>	<u>16.2%</u>
Total Current Assets	42,142.00	36,255.10	5,886.90	16.2%
Fixed Assets				
Office equipment-asset	4,359.91	4,359.91	0.00	0.0%
Total Fixed Assets	<u>4,359.91</u>	<u>4,359.91</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>46,501.91</u>	<u>40,615.01</u>	<u>5,886.90</u>	<u>14.5%</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Accounts Payable				
Accounts payable	1.00	0.00	1.00	100.0%
Total Accounts Payable	<u>1.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Other Current Liabilities				
Deferred revenue- Brick sales	75.00	0.00	75.00	100.0%
Deferred income board bricks	75.00	0.00	75.00	100.0%
Payroll Liabilities	-20.00	0.00	-20.00	-100.0%
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>130.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>130.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>131.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>131.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Total Liabilities	131.00	0.00	131.00	100.0%
Equity				
Unrestrict (retained earnings)	54,138.38	23,416.46	30,721.92	131.2%
Net Income	-7,767.47	17,198.55	-24,966.02	-145.2%
Total Equity	<u>46,370.91</u>	<u>40,615.01</u>	<u>5,755.90</u>	<u>14.2%</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>46,501.91</u>	<u>40,615.01</u>	<u>5,886.90</u>	<u>14.5%</u>

Your museum is once again becoming a grand old structure.

We need volunteers to prepare for a new coat of paint. The paint and tools will be at the house so if you find yourself with time to devote to a project, let us know. If you would like to volunteer for any of the many

projects that will be required, please let me or anyone with PAPHA know. We will schedule work days at your convenience.

The PAPHA Board would like to encourage anyone who has knowledge, artifacts, etc., that should be included in the museum, to let us know.



At left is Mathews Place. Above is the United States Coast Guard double ender boat. (from PAPHA photo files)

Fifty Years from Town

BY RICK PRATT

(Intro: Cameron and Rick Pratt were the lighthouse keepers at the Aransas Pass Light Station for almost twenty years. This story briefly sums up some of their experiences while living there. Rick is currently compiling a book about their two decades on the tiny island, titled "Everything Comes by Boat").



Frequently, we were asked how far from town the lighthouse was. It took a while to formulate a proper answer because distance can't always be measured in miles.

For instance, how far is it to the store when there is a norther blowing, and the only way to get there is to run down Lydia Ann Channel, then cross the Corpus Christi Ship Channel in an open boat, enter the harbor, tie up at the dock, transfer to a car, then back to the boat, cross the ship channel and down Lydia Ann Channel once more, into the creek, tie up at the dock, carry the load down the walkway and finally up the stairs to the house?

And of course, since there is no one else on the water during times like that, it carries an extra bit of risk.

The answer is, "too darned far to get a newspaper or a gallon of milk." Far enough that you tend not to forget things, especially car keys, after a few mess-ups.



To really understand the situation, you must realize that we had our own water system,

power system, sewage system, phone system and trash hauling system. (That was me).

Our cooling was the wind, and our heat was a wood stove.

We could only receive one television station. (Luckily, it was the Public Ac-

cess Channel)...definitely shades of the 1950s.

Everything that broke was our responsibility. We couldn't just pick up the phone, assuming it still worked, and call the power company, or the water company or plumber to come out and fix things.

The phone and power lines ran over our creek, across a mile of salt marsh and mangrove swamp, and then under the shrimper's channel.

Believe me its hard to find a leak in a phone line while standing in cold salt water in a norther wearing waders.

The full effect of being self sufficient doesn't hit for a while, then becomes a bit of a burden and bother, then gradually settles in to being normal and nice.

Then we grew to like it.

This lovely place taught us very quickly the difference in want and need.

For example, our fresh water came from the sky and was caught in cisterns.

I suspect some of you don't know what cisterns are, much less what it is like to live with them. They are big barrels, usually connected to the rain gutters that drain your roof.

They are very efficient gatherers of water and should be used a lot more, particularly in places like ours where water may become scarce in the future.

Cisterns work because you can harvest half a gallon of water per square foot of roof per inch of rain.

That number is burned in my brain after nearly two decades of depending

exclusively on these big barrels for all of our water needs.

It is enough, plenty actually, once you learn to live with it.

And we learned. We learned not to leave the water running when brushing teeth or shaving or rinsing dishes. We learned how to take a good, but quick, shower. We learned

how to wash in the creek when we ran out of water. We also learned that both Ivory soap and yellow Joy dish detergent suds nicely in salt water.

Early on, we learned the absolute, unadulterated joy of standing in the shower for non-stop luxury while it was raining. It was free water from heaven.

When guests would leave the water running, it was dang near impossible not to turn it off for them and very hard not to frown and deliver a lecture in the bargain.



We learned how heavy water is when you have to haul it two hundred gallons at a time. That old Whaler looked like a pregnant guppy with the tank on board.

And, probably most important, we used salt water for the toilets...a big, big saving.

We finally decided we were "two miles and fifty years" from town.

We adopted the attitude that if we were in a hurry, we sure wouldn't live in South Texas in a lighthouse.

Overall, we agree, it was worth all the trouble.

Back in the Day: Memories from Marion (the Librarian)...

BY MARION FERSING

Back in the day, going to Mathews Place with my daddy was a real treat. We got to see all the fishing equipment a person needed to catch anything from an angelfish to a tarpon. When we gals got older, it was fun to see “what boys worked there”. Every time we went, we would see anglers standing next to the big catches of the day hanging on big white boards as photos were taken.

As I recall, the streets were made of oyster shells and there were very few stop signs and no traffic lights. We gals would go “trolling for fun” around town every day. That really meant we were looking for boys!

Back in the 1950s, Port A had an honest-to-goodness movie theater. It was located where Millie’s Resale Shop is now. After buying your ticket, you would walk inside, sit down, and look up. That’s when you noticed the stars and moon looking back at you. We kids thought that was COOL, a theater with no roof...and the movies were great.

Riding inner tubes on the waves while we linked our feet together was great; something I look forward to doing this summer.

Big sign on highway around Austin said “Port Aransas....where they bite ev-



ery day.” And daddy would say....”Yeah, the suckers.”

Our big family of grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles would stay at the Spanish Village with my family and re-

ally enjoyed it. Back then, they were all painted green and that suited us just fine.

I miss the wooden pier of the 1940s and ‘50s. It was always crowded, and people caught a lot of fish. The highlight for me was catching angelfish and hard-heads. About five of six men would be at the end of the pier fishing for tarpon. Whenever someone had one on the line, he would yell “Tarpon On” and everyone else brought in their lines. The man would walk back and forth to tire out the tarpon and finally bring it in. Many times, a scale was removed and the name of fisherman, date caught, and length of tarpon were inscribed. Many of those signed scales are on the wall in the Tarpon Inn, some dating back to the 1930’s. Go see for yourself.

One summer in the ‘50s, our family of five kids each brought a friend to Port Aransas and stayed for two weeks. We took up two full cabins and the little boys still had to sleep in the station wagon. We had fun swimming, crabbing and going to the movies. When it came time to check out, the manager told my dad, “Please don’t come back any more, you have mostly daughters who swim twice a day, and wash their hair that often. Consequently, my septic tank is floating away.”

