

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

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PAPHA Newsletter

August 2008

The Museum Work Continues BY BRUCE REYNOLDS

Status of Port Aransas Museum Building as of 8/8/2008:

Phase I has been completed. The outside of the building is complete with the exception of the prep, primer and paint part. PAPHA will have a series of volunteer days to accomplish this. We completely replaced the walls enclosing the addition to the house and were required to put on a new roof on that addition.

[Editor's note: At a workday, Saturday, Aug. 9, three sides of



Workday, Aug. 9

Work continued as these photos show.



Below, volunteers scraped, primed and painted. At left, PAPHA President

Sharon Stricker and Rev. Richard Safford scrape on front of the building. In the next photo, it's a family affair with Joanne Klein and her children, Emily, 14 and Alex, 8, working on the porch deck. Norris Stricker and Shirlee Page can be seen through the windows painting the outside. Lesli Reynolds sweeps up inside and the back of the museum is shown.



the first floor of the museum exterior were prepped, primed and painted by volunteers. The porch deck and railings were primed.]

The original 1909 house wood was in good shape for the most part. Window trim had to be replaced on most windows. The front porch and foundation which supported the second floor was rotten and had to be replaced. The carpenters we used had to be creative at times to duplicate the look of the original house.

Phase II has been completed. All interior walls that required removal has

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Religious Memorabilia Requested

Pictures, documents and mementos pertaining to religion on the island are being sought.

The Port Aransas Museum plans to document the growth in and impact on the community by our various churches as they were organized, built and as they served those living in Port Aransas and neighboring areas on Mustang and San Jose Islands.

Faith was a large part of the fabric that held this small group of settlers together in spite of many dire hardships. Not all of the early communities survived but in spite of severe storm experiences, these hardy people kept coming back, shaking themselves off, joining hands and starting over.

Look at us now. The faith impact on the early settlers is well documented in pictures and documents stored away in the attics of many of the homes now occupied by descendants of brave men

and women arriving on the island before and after the turn of the century.

Please take time to find any pieces of

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Thanks a lot!

Rick Pratt, left, thanks Outlaw Services owner Mayor Claude Brown for the donation of his labor and machines to put in the pilings for the Port Aransas Museum.

From the President

BY SHARON STRICKER

July was certainly a busy month for PAPHA.

Bruce Reynolds continues to act as our onsite supervisor meeting with contractors to obtain bids on projects, selecting materials and contractors, coordinating their work, and making sure all supplies are available for the volunteers.

The wall where the fireplace was removed was closed with new matching siding added to the exterior.

The inspector found additional rotting siding and beams. This required removing several windows to repair the casings. All the rotten wood has been replaced and the windows reinstalled, including new trim. The roof is 90% complete. The porch has been rebuilt, including floor joists, flooring, trim, and railings. Great job Bruce!

We had twelve volunteers on July 19 help primer the exterior of the house. What a crew we were!

We finished painting in three hours. As we were packing up to go home, Bob Pettit of Port A Brewing Co. showed up and invited us to his new brew pub for free pizza. The food was great and everyone was very appreciative. These random acts of kindness make Port A the very special place it is to live, work and visit. Thanks to George Armanovs, Amanda Boyd, Betty Bundy, John Fucik, Jake Gann, Pam Greene, Bonnie Isaac, Trudy Martinez, Drew Ninnink, Port Aransas Brewing Co., Bruce Reynolds, Norris Stricker, Sharon Stricker, The Moorings, and, of course, the *South Jetty* newspaper for the wonderful coverage.

Rick Stryker, Director of the Museum

of Science and History Corpus Christi hosted Betty Bundy and Norris and Sharon Stricker at his museum recently. In 1980, Hurricane Allen unearthed in the dunes three fragments of a massive structure consisting of layers of criss-crossing timbers fastened by wooden dowels and iron rods an inch or more in diameter. Hurricane Juan in November of the same year reburied the wreck. It was tentatively identified as a Civil War anti-torpedo raft. Rick showed us a replica of a Civil War anti-torpedo raft that our museum will be able to use as an exhibit.

A fundraiser was held in late July at The Moorings Townhomes. More than 70 people attended. Rick Pratt, Betty Turner, Jane Gnazzo, Gary Wilson, and I handled introductions and a brief history and overview of PAPHA. Boo Hauser with the Texas Historical Commission was our guest speaker. He spoke to the attendees regarding how essential it is to the community that Port Aransas save some of its history. He was very impressed on the work already accomplished to date and

feels most everyone will benefit from the efforts of the organization. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank all who helped with this major undertaking. Special thanks to board member and trustee Jane Gnazzo and her husband Jerry for use of the townhouse and being gracious hosts for this event.

Going GREEN? PAPHA can help. Sooner or later the flimsy plastic bags so popular with retailers yet so damaging to our ecology should be replaced. PAPHA has high quality cloth tote bags available. Go green. Beat the crowd and support our very worthy cause at the same time. You can order from Betty Bundy at ggbun7@centurytel.net or by calling 361-749-3406



Cactus gets the tour

Cactus Pryor, radio personality, newspaper humorist and speaker, right, is told the way the Port Aransas Museum will be set up when he and his wife, Peggy, second from left stopped in during the last museum workday. PAPHA board members Rick Pratt and Betty Bundy give the tour.



A fundraiser held in July added to the coffers of the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association.

Memorabilia

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memorabilia you would be willing to allow PAPHA to copy and document.

Camera and copy equipment provided by the Coastal Bend Foundation will allow PAPHA to add your treasures to its photo archives. Some may wish to give PAPHA some treasures to be included in exhibit planning and archives

where all see and treasure them.

PAPHA is looking forward to providing school tours not only for PAISD but for other school districts in neighboring cities and towns. Its goal is that the Port Aransas Museum will be especially meaningful to local children as it tells the story of their ancestors and other children to whom they can easily relate.

Each church will be asked to provide

a copy of its written history to add to our archives, using its story to build an exhibit. Cooperation with these efforts will ensure the whole story will be told.

Now is the time! Check the attic, then look at your calendar. Volunteers in "sit down" jobs are needed along with those who can provide muscle.

Would you be willing to take training to help staff the museum? Call 361-749-3406 to get your name on the list.

Jed Brundrett and the old island way

BY RICK PRATT

I was watching from the porch of the keeper's house when a tornado blew down the power pole in the middle of the salt marsh. It was the exact middle actually; pole number fifteen of thirty.

The pole snapped near the base, twisted around in a big circle, like a kid being swung by his hands, and then came down.

The lines were left bobbing in the air still attached to the cross arm.

It was just after sunrise and the event was accompanied by a blue fireball and a crackling noise.

I knew I had a pretty big job ahead.

Frankly it was hard to know where to start. The pole was ruined, the lines were bound to break pretty soon cutting off all our power, and the whole thing was in the middle of the salt marsh, miles from any road.

I called several major contractors. It took a while even to get an interested person on the other end of the line. The job was just too odd. Finally I begin to get some estimates.

I thought the first one was a joke. It was about the price of a house in Port A. Cheaper back then to be sure, but still... just to replace a power pole and rewire it.

Over the next few days several more estimates came in near or higher than the first. The job was looking tougher.

One contractor was talking about air-lifting the pole into place with a big helicopter. This was getting out of hand.

Then I told Jed Brundrett about the problem one morning at the Island Café over coffee.

Jed is a born on islander from one of the oldest families. A combat veteran of Vietnam, he spent a couple hitches walking point on patrol because he was older than most of the kids there and felt responsible for them.

He left 'Nam with stripes on his sleeve and a lot to think about.

When he got home he built a shrimp boat and went fishing for a few years. As the waters got crowded with other shrimpers, he adapted his boat for dock work and became the guy who installed pilings in Port A.

His old rusty boat was named Josie for his daughter, and he could drive it in and out of hell without getting singed. There was nothing about pilings...or power poles ...that he didn't understand.

Typical of the tough self-reliant folks bred here on the island, he never understood the words "you can't do that." He took the job.

We hired another islander Wayne Bowen, a welder, diesel mechanic, scrap collector and try anything once kind of guy to help, then we got started.

Jed pre-drilled a 30' pole to take the existing cross arm and then carried it hoisted up on the Josie boat from the dock in Port A to the creek mouth along Lydia Ann Channel nearest the broken stub. After anchoring up and jumping in the water, the pole became our primitive canoe and we paddled it about a mile to the end of the creek. We were still about four hundred yards from the splintered stub.

Next the thirty foot pole turned canoe had to be rolled through the mud with tools called peeveys, a handle with a hinged hook on the end, until we reached the site. This was long, muddy and exhausting.

Who was it that said "We do three impossible things before breakfast"?

The next step involved digging a hole with a posthole digger and shovels, then using the stub as a dead man and an ingenious block and tackle rigged by Jed, lifted the 30' pole into place and dropped it into the hole. It was a little slanted, but we were satisfied.

Jed laughed and joked most of the time and when the job slowed down, pointed out, "We need someone shooting at us... then we'd dig this hole a lot faster." We talked about old girl friends, told war stories and fish stories and laughed about the ignoramuses running the town.

That was the morning and the evening of the second day. Dirty and tough as it was, we had a lot of fun doing it.

On the beginning of the third day we had the power company disconnect the switches, a mile away on the mainland, so we could safely coax the cross arm up and into

place, and bolt it to the new pole.

Jed shimmied up the pole to tackle this one, while Wayne and I pushed and lifted with two by fours from below.

Cell phones were new about then and I rang up the power company to have them reconnect the switches. The lady on the other end told me they could do that sometime between 9am and 5pm the next Wednesday.

We walked and waded back to Josie boat, upped anchor and headed for the spot on the Aransas Pass Shrimpers channel where the lines went underwater.

All the way over, Wayne Bowen was lashing poles together, ending up with a device hard to describe but about twenty feet long and topped with a deck broom.

Jed ran the Josie aground; Wayne hopped into the water and waded ashore. He raised the newly made tool which wobbled and swung around in small circles until he finally got it in control.

With two nicely aimed whacks, he re-connected the switches. Way off at the end of the line, we saw the light come on in the tower. It looked like a star.

The cost...just a little less than a month's rent on that same house in Port A.

If you are boating in Lydia Ann Channel in the vicinity of the light house, you can still see pole number fifteen. It is the slightly slanted one with a broken stump next to it.

I spent many mornings with a cup of coffee on the porch of the keeper's house looking proudly at that crooked thing way out there in the marsh.

Never bet against Jed Brundrett, and never underestimate the old island way.



Port Aransas School 1915 ... PAPHA archives

PAM Awarded IMLS Collection Resources

The Port Aransas Museum (PAM) will receive aid in its quest to preserve treasured objects and artifacts for future generations.

PAM was awarded one of the 3,000 free sets of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Connecting to Collections Bookshelf.

The essential set of resources based on an application describing the needs and plans for care of its collections includes conservation books, DVDs, and online resources donated by IMLS, the primary source of federal funding of the nation's museums and libraries, and its cooperator, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).

"Selected libraries, museums, and archives are in the forefront of our call to action on behalf of America's collections," said Anne-Imelda Radice, Director of IMLS.

"According to a recent national survey, our important collections are at great risk, and without them, the American story simply cannot be told to future generations."

The IMLS Bookshelf focuses on col-

Nancy's Notes

--a message from museum interim director Nancy Phillips

We almost have a building in which to build a museum. Now we need great exhibits and people to help with all kinds of planning.

Those who helped with the painting did a great job. Those working on the landscaping are fantastic. Isn't it fun to read the bricks and find people you know?

See, we're already having fun at our new museum and it isn't even close to being finished! I've been thinking lately about parties we can have for fall holidays and, of course, we'll need some holiday decorations.

There's so much to do, and so many great ideas yet to surface. Won't you become a part of this fun project? If you have an idea, or if you just want to get in on the fun planning, please call me and we'll visit about our future. My phone number is 361-749-0321 and my email address is nancy@seminoleoklahoma.com. (I get my email address through my son.)

lections typically found in history or art museums and in libraries' special collections, with an added selection of texts for zoos, aquaria, public gardens, and nature centers. It addresses such topics as the philosophy and ethics of collecting, collections management and planning, emergency preparedness, and culturally specific conservation issues.

The IMLS Bookshelf is a crucial component of Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action, a conservation initiative that the Institute launched in 2006. IMLS began the initiative in response to a 2005 study by Heritage Preservation documenting the dire state of the nation's collections. The multi-faceted, multi-year initiative shines a nationwide

spotlight on the needs of America's collections, especially those held by smaller institutions, which often lack the human and financial resources necessary to adequately care for their collections.

The IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.imls.gov.



Early US Coast Guard station ... PAPHA archives

Museum work

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been done, and support beams were put in place. The new interior wall has been framed out, and we are ready for the next phase.

Phase III (Estimated completion 10/1/08) The complete house will be rewired to meet commercial code. The museum will be equipped with track lighting throughout the exhibit areas with motion detection sensors. All switches will meet ADA code. Many plugs including floor plugs will be installed throughout the exhibit areas. Computer wire will be installed between the gift shop and the research office. The gift shop and upstairs rooms will be wired for cable.

Plumbing work will include existing fixtures upstairs, an ADA compliant restroom downstairs and a small

sink in gift shop. The A/C units will be plumbed into the main drains.

New A/C units will be installed for both floors. The exhibit area will have a five-ton multiple speed air handler and condenser as well as a dehumidifier. The upstairs will have existing two-ton air handler with new condenser. The condensers will be installed on the back of building on the Allister corner.

Phase IV: Completion with occupancy permit (Waiting fundraising for completion date)

Install insulation, sheetrock and either bead board or tape and float the walls and ceilings. Install the switches, plugs, light fixtures, and bathroom fixtures. Paint inside of museum. Repair the museum first floor where needed and refinish.