



Volume 3, Issue 4

PAPHA Newsletter

April 2009

April 23: Celebration set for Museum move anniversary

The public is invited to an Anniversary Celebration of the Port Aransas Museum building move on Thursday, April 23.

It will begin at 315 Oleander (the corner of Roberts and Oleander) at the location the house was before PAPHA moved it to its current location at the corner of Brundrett and Alister.

Mayor Brown will start it off with opening remarks. Then celebrators will make the walk via the route the house

was moved to where the museum is now open.

At 6:30 pm, a champagne toast will be made, the birthday cake will be cut, and then fellowship begins.

At 7 pm, a video will be shown of the

house move. When that is completed, PAPHA Founder John Fucik will speak about the Past; Museum Director Rick Pratt will speak about the Present and Future and PAPHA Treasurer Bruce Reynolds will speak about finances.

Little Museum with Big Ideas Gives Thanks

BY BETTY BUNDY, PAPHA Grant Committee Chairman

That's right we have BIG IDEAS! We plan to make Port Aransas Museum the BEST little museum in Texas, where people from all over the world will come to see why the history of small communities throughout the United States, especially those on barrier islands, where visitors as varied as Indians, soldiers, engineers, airmen, ranchers, Coast Guardsmen, et al, have been and will continue to be, the very fabric which makes this country great.

They will continue to do so only if we tell their story, pass it down to our children and their children, make this an exciting place to come to, and back to, because there is so much to tell, and it is so important that we all know about Port Aransas and why it is an important part of this great country.

I want to thank everyone that has pitched in to help. The mayor and his wonderful heavy machines, the City Council, and our City manager who understand the vision, and all of you who helped to make the opening possible in December by volunteering, long and often, to get the job done. There are those who gave and gave and others who gave both time and money to get the doors open and make

new things happen; the tireless Board that oversees, attends long meetings and give so generously; the Docents who come faithfully to tell the stories and answer questions; to Bruce Reynolds without whom all of the renovation and preservation would never have taken place; to our Trustees, the Rachal Foundation, the Coastal Bend Foundation, the Trull Foundation and the Texas Historical

See 'Big Ideas' on Page 3

? ? ? ? ? ?

**YOU ASK,
PAPHA TELLS!**

What would you like to know about Port Aransas and Mustang Island?
Email your question(s) to surfside1@charter.net.
Please type "PAPHA" on the subject line.
Check the forthcoming Newsletters for your answer!

? ? ? ? ? ?

Inside this Issue:

One Postmaster..... Page 2

WWII, Part 2..... Page 3

Focus On..... Page 3

Closer Look..... Page 4

PUBLICATION OF THE PORT ARANSAS
PRESERVATION AND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Editor, Pam Greene

PAPHA Board:

Nancy Phillips, president
Sharon Stricker, vice-president
John Fucik, secretary
Bruce Reynolds, treasurer
Sylvia Buttler
Mark Creighton
Randy D'Herde
Jane Gnazzo
Kristi Goldstein
Herb Lancaster
Christina Milligan
Rick Pratt
Chris Shanklin

A Town With One House Which Has A Postmaster

IT IS THE RENDEZVOUS OF MANY MILLIONAIRE SPORTSMEN WHO AS DIRECTORS OF A CLUB ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL---ITS APPROPRIATE NAME

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

Tarpon, Texas Oct. 14, 1902 –

Texas has one of the most peculiar towns in the United States. It has but one house, yet a mail delivery and Postmaster. Its inhabitants are all wealthy, and devote themselves entirely to sport. In fact, Sport is the name of the town. No one is allowed to land there who is not in search of sport, and any kind of work beyond landing a tarpon or shooting a goose or duck is unknown, if not prohibited. In short, Sport is a sportsman's paradise, where the sterner things of life are forgotten and left on the mainland seven miles distant.

Sport is 'way down on the Gulf of Mexico, but there are no mosquitoes; it is always cool, and after searching the stroller could not find a graveyard nor could he learn that any one had ever died within the limits of this extraordinary municipality; nor had it occurred to any of the inhabitants to kill any one to start a graveyard, after the cheerful Arizona plan. It would be difficult to find a place on the map more distant from the great centers of population than Sport. To reach it from New York one may take a Galveston steamer, then go to San Antonio unless the water trip is preferred, when the steamer is taken to Galveston, from which point a little schooner runs down the Gulf coast once in two or three weeks. When you reach the Gulf from San Antonio, you are not at your destination. Here you take the mail boat and sail down the bay of Aransas to the town of Sport, founded by Edward Green, son of Mrs. Hetty Green.

Sport was so named because there is nothing but sport there. It is omnipresent in the guise of duck shooting in Winter, crab shooting in Summer, and tarpon angling, not to speak of channel bass, jackfish, alligator gars, kingfish the year round, and a score or more of the fine game fish of the Texas Coast

which make their headquarters at and around Sport. The entire coast of Texas has a barrier reef from six to eight miles off shore in the form of a sandbank from six inches to twenty or thirty feet above the surface, and from one-half to four miles wide. These long attenuated phantom-like islands begin far up by the mouth of the Mississippi and beyond, and are more or less ephemeral. Some have been here for ages; others at times have disappeared, as Lost Island that was wiped out in a night with all on board—hotels, guests and scores of the cream of Louisiana gentry. Others try to disappear and fail, as the island at Galveston, while others have always withstood the "slings and arrows of outrageous" gales, as Mustang and St. Joseph. These long sand islands form an inland sea, like Indian River, all along shore, the bay being from eight to twelve feet in depth, famous sailing or yachting ground for the Texans. Mustang Island is one of the largest, and the sea has broken through at Aransas, forming the Pass of that name and separating the islands, the passage being not an eighth of a mile across and over thirty or forty feet in depth. The town of Sport is on St. Joseph's and looms up in the mirage for miles about, and at night, when its one house gleams with electricity, it makes a lighthouse in that region almost unnecessary.

THE ISLAND OF SPORT

The Island of Sport is perfectly flat, of pure white sand, and so near the level of the sea that the highest waves that beat

upon it on the Gulf side can be easily seen from the level on the bay side; and standing at Sport it can be seen how the island is growing, or blowing, into the bay. The prevailing wind is from the Gulf, and over the smooth, silvery island, rivers and currents of white sand are flowing, some straight ahead, others winding in and out, coming with marvelous swiftness and visible some distance away. As far as the eye can reach these surface rivers of sand are seen, and the observer can but wonder that the entire island does not blow into the inner bay, forgetting that the heavy surf rolling in continuously is piling up the supply faster than it can blow away.

This vast sand tract is Sport. Not a spear of grass, a tree, or a shrub, nothing green, nothing but sand; the Gulf on one side, the Pass to the south, and the bay, six miles wide, to the west, while to the north extends the eternal sand; but one house, yet no region could be more densely populated. The inhabitants, indigenous to the soil are there in millions, spirit crabs, as pale and diaphanous as the sand itself, and shooting at them from the piazza with a .22 caliber rifle is one of the pastimes at Sport. The single house is the clubhouse of the Tarpon Club, and is probably the most sumptuous purely angling club in the country, or anywhere for that matter. Mr. Green, it is said, is the originator of the club, and to find so fine a building so far from the mainland is one of the surprises to the visitor to the Texas coast. The original attraction was the tarpon, which gather in the Pass in such numbers that there is literally no end to them, 800 being the catch for one season and comparatively few fishing for them. Tarpon fishing is the finest sport in the world in the field of angling, as the great fish attains a length of seven feet and leaps like a black



PAPHA archives

St. Jo club exclusive

The Tarpon Club, circa 1903, is shown in this photo taken approximately near where the Ancel Brundrett pier exists today at the end of Station Street.

See 'Town' on Page 4

FOCUS ON ...

Each month a focus will shine on a different docent that volunteers to work for the Port Aransas Museum.

Jan Novak

The cute little lady with the always present smile you often see as you enter the museum is Jan Novak. She's a docent at the museum and works about once a week—more often in an emergency.

Jan moved here from Arkansas with her husband several years ago. She is now a widow and continues to live in and love Port Aransas. She's been a volunteer at the Computer Center, is a volunteer with the after school latch-key program, and is active in Kiwanis Club.

On Sundays you'll find Jan at the Community Presbyterian Church where she is a member. She's also one of the



Red Hat ladies who enjoy getting out for activities together.

Jan loves playing card games and belongs to a weekly bridge-playing group.

Pepper Pendzinski

Pepper Pendzinski drives the trolley for the City of Port Aransas three days a week and works at the museum as a docent every week or so. She drives the trolley and gives tours at the museum with the same thought, "I get to show people our great little town."

She's also a member of the choir at the Community Presbyterian Church and

very involved in all social activities at the Pioneer RV Resort, where she lives.

One of Pepper's favorite activities is acting in productions of the Port Aransas Community Theatre. Everyone always remembers her from "It's a Bad Year for Tomatoes" and other comedies.

Pepper is one of those transplanted residents from the east coast who has truly found her home in Port Aransas.

Big Ideas Continued from Page 1

Association, without whom we could not have paid the bills. Then WOW came the first "Online Auction" and the big dinner, and everyone gave some more.

I want to especially thank our donors, who made the "Old Town Festival" a real celebration: Port A Brewery, Mike Hall and his great Family Center IGA that keeps all local organizations moving forward, CCMS Properties, Mark Grosse, Martin Ulisse Importers and the cMarket people who led us through the process were all part of the success story. But most of all I want to thank all of the donors large and small who brought us the items to auction and all of the bidders who came either "online" or in person to make the whole thing a success. Thank you one and all. I almost forgot all the many people who have bought an engraved paver or block and been a significant source of our income. As the sidewalks continue to fill with "people" memories, they will attract others to become a permanent part of Port Aransas. There is still lots of room. I invite everyone to add their names in stone in Port A. As centuries go by, stories of the coming years will someday be part of the Port Aransas HISTORY too. What more beautiful place is there to be set in stone than in the lovely Museum Gardens, possible due to the job accomplished by the Port Aransas Garden Club. Members have made it their business to spend money, dig and plant to truly make the Museum and Community Center the "crown jewel" of Old Town and a place to remember our loved ones.

Don't sit back and rest!! It's not time to stop giving, either time, your spare cash, stories and especially your memorabilia of the past. Bring your photos, lend your priceless artifacts and help make your museum grow into a Texas, yes indeed, an American treasure.

U-boat off the Aransas Pass

'PART TWO' OF A SERIES ON WORLD WAR II

BY JOHN G. FORD

When the German submarine popped up near the Aransas Pass waterway in January 1942, a coast artillery battery should have been sent to Port Aransas. However, that type of unit was not available, and so a field artillery battery was dispatched as a stopgap measure—naval situations call for weapons serviced by coast, not field, artillery batteries.

The coast artillery finally arrived in Port A in April 1942, when Battery E/50—Battery E, 50th Coast Artillery Regiment—relieved the field artillery. The E/50 efforts to build a fortification to guard shipping in the Aransas Pass and the Humble petroleum complex were destroyed by an August hurricane.

In October 1942, Battery E/50 was replaced by Battery G/20, and it was this unit that did the lion's share in constructing Fort Port Aransas. The fort had searchlights for night action, a motor pool, and hutments for 360 troops. The business end of the fort was two 155mm (6 inch) GPF cannons emplaced in the high dunes just south of the jetty. Each cannon was on a hard stand—a Panama mount—that allowed the right-left traversing of

the weapon. Also located in the dunes were ammunition bunkers and range computing towers. (The sites of the gun emplacements are still visible in the dune field across the street from the Marine Science Institute.)

Battery G/20 was relieved in March 1944 by Battery E/20, which manned the pair of 155s until Fort Port Aransas closed on 1 July 1944 (enemy threats in the Gulf having ended). When the troops pulled out of the fort three days later, they left the wood structures as war surplus. The Port Aransas townsfolk, truly waste-not, want-not people, disassembled those structures and stored the material for future use. (Built in 1949, the Community Center incorporated lumber from Fort Port Aransas.)

The defense missions of the U.S. Army units serving in Port Aransas during World War II were successful: No attack was made on shipping within the Aransas Pass or on the strategic petroleum complex.

[John G. Ford is a local, award winning history writer. His book, *A Texas Island*, is offered at the Port Aransas Museum.]

A Closer Look [at our Gift Shop]

Linda Hansen:

What first catches your eye in the Linda Hansen display are the gorgeous night-lights she makes from her dichroic glass. Then as your eye is drawn into the display of her work, the many facets become visible.

Linda and her husband, Randy, live in Port Aransas. You may have met her when she was the owner of Island Woman before she sold to have more time to devote to her art.

She was an art major in college and took a dichroic art glass class several years ago at the local art center. Linda describes the process as beginning with pieces of glass that she combines and then accents with the dichroic which

gives the reflective quality. Then she fires it all in a kiln.

She sells with the Port Aransas Museum gift shop, an exclusive shop in Dublin, Ireland, the Corpus Christi Art Center, and a shop in Austin and one in Colorado. Her son-in-law is from Dublin, her contacts were through him and her daughter for that far flung project.

Vicki Roberson:

When you see the label in Vicki Roberson's beautiful embroidered hand towels, it says she's from Rockport. But, we know her heart and much of her life was deeply rooted in Port Aransas. She



and her husband moved here 31 years ago. They bought the Newport Motor Inn which, after three years, burned.

Her husband then went in the marine salvage business and she worked at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in the accounting department.

Only recently did she move to Rockport. "I had to get out of that tree house," she says, because of the stairs.

Vicki makes the most beautiful hand towels with sea side and beach motifs. They are made only on the high quality Martha Stewart towels. Vicki really has an eye for design and colors.

She still comes to Port Aransas for hair cuts, so she can update the supply and respond to requests for colors or designs.

Town — Continued from Page 2

bass; leaps always and all the time; sometimes into the boat, sometimes over it, sometimes through it. When the tarpon disappear in November the bay is fairly alive with ducks, and the sportsmen from Texas and Colorado fill the club and the adjacent towns of Rockport, Tarpon and Corpus Christi, so there was some reason for calling the town Sport.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

The Mayor of Sport is Mr. Brice, who receives the members and guests, while the Common Council, the Aldermen of Sport, may be considered to be the Board of Directors of the Tarpon Club, which has a membership of 300 or more, chiefly from New York, Colorado, and Texas, all prominent men and men of wealth, as to support a clubhouse and keep it open the year round for the benefit of the members and their guests means the expenditure of large sums. The club is open day and night, and in season filled with sportsmen, members and their wives and their friends, so fortunate as to obtain the entree'.

The singular selection of the locality was due primarily to the fishing and to the cool constant breeze which blows over this spot. The clubhouse is mounted on piles driven deep into the sand, so that it stands high in air and the sand blows beneath it. All the rooms are so arranged that they have the full sweep of the wind.

There are fine wide piazzas and corridors surrounding it, on which hammocks and lounging chairs appealing to the angler at the end of the day after playing perhaps a score of tarpon. The office, or living room, occupies the entire first floor, and here are tables loaded with periodicals and literature of the day, while on the walls are tarpon, the largest ever taken by a member—175 pounds—and the smallest, with mounted specimens of the various ducks and game birds shot there, and, of special interest to anglers, the lists of the tarpon catches of members back for several years. This out-of-the-way clubhouse is furnished with every modern luxury, exemplifying the fact that the American sportsmen propose to have their comfort even out to sea. At night, the building is a blaze of electric lights, the latter leading down the long walk to the private club dock. On the pier stands a large aquarium tank, built by Mr. Green, in which are exhibited the various game fishes of the region, and in which several tarpon are to be placed to test the possibility of taking one of these magnificent fishes to the St. Louis Exposition alive to exhibit to the world one of the greatest of American game fishes.

TOWN WILL NEVER GROW

The town of Sport, with its one house, is destined never to grow. No real estate boomer will ever lay out its streets and indicate the City Hall and Court House

even on paper, for the very good reason that the inhabitants of Sport do not favor municipal growth; in fact, they are so opposed to it that they own all the land adjacent to the town, and no one can build or even land without permission; even the boatmen, which the inhabitants of Sport hire, sleep and live at Tarpon, a mile distant. Each boatman has his private signal, kept at the clubhouse, and when one is wanted the Mayor of Sport flings it to the breeze. The life saving sentinel, always on the lookout at Tarpon, sights it and reports, and twenty minutes later Mr. Green and his friends mayhap are in their boats on the way to the happy hunting grounds of the tarpon.

The town of Tarpon is almost as singular in its way as Sport. While visited by hundreds of people from all over the country, it has but one little inn for the entertaining of the public, and a few houses of boatmen and a life saving station, built on the sand, which not only blows in rivers, but is packing up against some of the houses, threatening to cover them up entirely. The house of a boatman visited by the writer had five feet of sand on a level over what had been the man's garden. A few years ago, the sand was stationary on the dunes, but suddenly the wind shifted in some peculiar way and the sand began to encroach on the town, piling up against houses, ruining all the vegetation that had become a fixture in the last forty years.